

Van Basten miss puts Dutch out

GOTHENBURG (R) — A penalty miss by Marco Van Basten put defending champions the Netherlands out of the European Championship when they lost to Denmark 5-4 in a shoot-out after a 2-2 draw in a thrilling semifinal Monday. Denmark went through to meet world champions Germany in the final when defender Kim Christofte scored the vital penalty to set off wild cheers from thousands of Danes in the Ullevi Stadium. Van Basten was the only player not to score from the spot kicks. His weak shot was saved when keeper Peter Schmeichel dived to his left. The Dutch were within four minutes of being eliminated in normal time before Frank Rijkaard scrambled the ball into the net from a corner to make the score 2-2. The Danes, surprise semifinalists after coming into the tournament as late replacements for Yugoslavia, had twice taken the lead in the first half through big midfielder Henrik Larsen. Dennis Bergkamp levelled at 1-1 but the title-holders were never able to get on top against the lively, quick passing Danes.



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Egypt bars Iraqi human rights team

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has refused entry to an Iraqi human rights team, the Arab Organisation for Human Rights said on Monday. The Cairo-based organisation said representatives of its Iraqi affiliate were due to discuss "some solutions for the humanitarian problems created by the Gulf war." The Iraqi team arrived from Jordan on Sunday with visas issued in Baghdad by the Indian embassy which represents Egypt in Iraq but officials at Cairo airport sent them back to Amman.

Iraq says parachute flares wounded farmers

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraq said Monday that parachute flares dropped by U.S. and British warplanes wounded farmers in the north of the country, leaving them with severe burns. The United States has denied Iraq's charge that allied warplanes dropped the flares over farmland in the north of the country, destroying thousands of tons of wheat and barley (see page 2). Baghdad's statement Monday was the first time it has said anyone was injured in the flare-dropping. The Iraqi News Agency quoted Agriculture Minister Abdul Wahab Mahmoud Abdul Wahab as saying a number of farmers "received severe burns" when the planes dropped the illumination flares. IANA said the new allegations came in a letter the minister sent to the director of the Sudan-based Arab Agriculture Organisation. He also said that an unspecified number of trucks, as well as farm equipment, were burned by the flares.

Newsman crashes into Gaza Strip

TEL AVIV (R) — A Chinese journalist, rushing to reach Israel in time for Tuesday's election, burst through the Egyptian border into the occupied Gaza Strip on Monday. Israeli troops caught him after a chase lasting several hours and put him back across the frontier. An army spokesman, who did not name the journalist, said: "Apparently he did not understand he was required to stop for border inspection and crashed into Gaza."

Moroccan parties demand election body

RABAT (R) — Four Moroccan opposition parties said on Monday they had asked the palace to set up an independent national commission with extensive powers to ensure honesty in this year's elections. The government has already announced official multi-party commissions to supervise the rural, municipal and legislative elections. The elections, the first time in eight years, will take place in stages over the next six months. The opposition said in a statement the electoral laws and the regulations governing the official commissions were "unclear and ambiguous" and did not reflect a national consensus as promised by King Hassan. The four parties sent the statement to Ahmad Reda Guedira, King Hassan's senior political adviser.

30 killed in Turkish rebel violence

ANKARA (R) — Turkish troops killed 20 Kurdish rebels and lost five men in a clash at a military post on the Iranian border on Monday, Anatolian news agency reported. Separately, five civilians were killed by Kurdish guerrillas who abducted four others in an overnight raid, officials said. It was the heaviest 24-hour death toll in the southeast this month. A total of 149 people were reported killed on the three bloodiest days of May and about 770 have died so far this year. Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel has in the past said Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas use Iranian territory to launch cross-border attacks. Iran denies helping the PKK. Syria curbed PKK activities in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley in April after Turkey hinted at military action.

Likud, Labour seen neck and neck on eve of Israeli elections

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli politicians scrambled to win over undecided voters on Monday as eve of election opinion polls showed the ruling Likud and opposition Labour parties neck and neck.

Labour leader Yitzhak Rabin, 70, criss-crossed the country in a helicopter in a final attempt to woo as many as possible of the 20 per cent of Israelis who say they do not know which way to vote on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, 76, who appeared to doze off during his final campaign rally on Sunday night, spent the day quietly in his office talking to Likud activists by telephone.

The final batch of polls Monday confirmed the trend of the past two weeks — Likud and its religious party allies narrowing Labour's lead.

Most surveys have consistently given Labour, out of power for most of the past 15 years, a lead of between two and 10 seats over Likud.

But neither party can muster an overall majority in the 120-seat parliament. Labour needs the support of the leftist Meretz party and Israeli Arabs to form a coalition. Likud needs the National Religious Party and two ultra-orthodox parties to remain in power.

The campaign by 25 parties has not fired many of Israel's 3.4 million voters. The main parties have avoided detailed discussion of big issues such as Arab-Israeli peace talks, Jewish settlement of the occupied territories, immigration and the economy. For much of the time the campaign has failed to rise above the level of smear and slogan-shouting.

Political analysts do not expect a clear cut result from the election which could herald weeks of horse-trading to form a coalition. Many commentators expect a repeat of the Likud-Labour unity government of 1984 to 1988 in which Mr. Shamir and former Labour chief Shimon Peres each served two years as prime minister.

"I believe it is the worst government we can form," Peres chief aide Yossi Beilin said of a unity government.

"It is a prescription for paralysis," he told a news conference on Monday. "I and the group of doves in the party will fight against unity government in any fashion."

Likud minister Ehud Olmert, who is close to Mr. Shamir, told the same conference he believed both Labour and Likud would prefer to form a narrow coalition. "You don't form a unity government as a matter of desire,"

he declared. But Mr. Olmert said he thought Mr. Rabin would prefer a union with Likud to an alliance with the far left.

"I think Rabin will prefer to sit with me to sitting with (Meretz member) Yossi Sarid," Mr. Olmert said. He acknowledged Likud was still trailing in the polls but added: "Traditionally polls show an advantage for Labour until the last day. The returns we get from our branches across the country are somewhat different."

Police quelled a riot in the southern town of Beersheba by hundreds of angry Israeli voters, army radio said. In the occupied Gaza Strip, unknown gunmen shot and wounded a policeman and a civilian, the army said.

Trouble flared in Beersheba where people waiting in long queues for voter registration cards ran out of patience and attacked police and interior ministry employees.

Army radio said police used force to suppress hundreds of rioters who spat at, cursed and hit police and interior ministry office guards. In Amman, Palestinian spokeswoman Hana Ashrawi said Monday that a survey which showed two thirds of former Israeli generals favouring a land-for-peace settlement with the Arabs demonstrated that security

(Continued on page 5)

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KING HONOURS ARAFAT: His Majesty King Hussein Monday conferred upon Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat the Al Nakba Distinguished Medal at Al Hashimiyah Palace in Amman (photo by Youssef Al Allan)

Jordan, Palestinians aim for real progress in peace talks

By Sana Atiyeh

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian and Palestinian delegations to peace talks with Israel Monday launched preparations for the next round of negotiations with a reaffirmation of their commitment to the peace process on the eve of Israel's general elections.

Discussed during Monday's two-and-a-half-hour meeting were strategies for the bilateral as well as multilateral negotiations, spokespersons for both sides said. The spokespersons said that their commitment to the peace talks were based on the principles of U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and that they

would negotiate with any Israeli government in power. "We are ready to negotiate with any Israeli government regardless of where it comes from," Jordanian spokesman Marwan Muasher told reporters referring to Tuesday's Israeli general elections. "We entered the peace process based on very clear conditions and framework set by the co-sponsors."

Palestinian spokeswoman Hana Ashrawi echoed this position, saying that Arab participation in the peace talks depended on international legitimacy "and not on the Israeli government in power."

Dr. Muasher and Dr. Ashrawi said that such meetings were necessary to intensify and strengthen coordination between the two sides before they face the next round of bilateral talks in late July or early August. Dr. Muasher and Dr. Ashrawi said that both sides were pleased with the level of coordination and that meetings would be held more frequently.

Dr. Muasher said the two sides meet again today. The relationship between the two sides becomes stronger as the negotiations proceed. "The atmosphere of the meeting as well as the actual content and form of coordination between the two sides before they face the next round of bilateral talks in late July or early August. Dr. Muasher and Dr. Ashrawi said that both sides were pleased with the level of coordination and that meetings would be held more frequently."

(Continued on page 5)

Brotherhood maintains 70,000 attended Azaideh's funeral

AMMAN (J.T.) — A spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood movement has dismissed as "grossly underestimated" the figure of 5,000 quoted for the people who attended Sunday's funeral of Mr. Ahmad Qataish Al Azaideh, a member of the Lower House of Parliament who passed away Saturday.

"There were some 70,000 people who took part in the funeral," the spokesman insisted. "People came from all over Jordan, and the crowd was easily estimated as 70,000," he said. "The people who converged from Madaba alone probably exceeded 5,000. So the total is much, much higher."

No official figures were released for the number of people who participated in the funeral of Mr. Azaideh, who was a popular Islamist leader and spokesman for the Brotherhood deputies in Parliament. But eyewitness re-

ports varied from several thousands to several tens of thousands.

Other than the Jordan Times, which quoted the 5,000 figure, only the Arabic daily Al Dustour gave a figure for those who attended the funeral. It said 70,000 people took part, but it did not give a source for its estimate.

The spokesman also denied that Deputy Fawzi Mansour had been appointed successor to Mr. Azaideh as leader of the Brotherhood deputies' bloc in the Lower House.

"The acting spokesman (leader) is still Deputy Ibrahim Mas'oud Khreisat, but no permanent successor has yet been elected to brother Azaideh," the spokesman said, clarifying that Deputy Mansour is the rapporteur of the bloc and not its spokesman.

Deputy sees 'general trend' to seek Sboul's resignation

AMMAN (R) — A group of Jordanian deputies plan to seek the resignation of Interior Minister Jawdat Sboul, blaming him for a "crackdown" on Muslim prayers earlier this month, lawmakers said Monday.

"Because of what happened at these prayers, there is a general trend, not only among the Muslim Brotherhood deputies, to ask for the resignation of the interior minister," said Deputy Hamza Mansour of the Muslim Brotherhood movement.

"But we have not yet decided on the way," he told Reuters.

Lower House of Parliament making it the largest single bloc there.

Mr. Mansour gave no further details on the Brotherhood's plans and did not say how many deputies had joined in the effort. A local newspaper said on Monday the Brotherhood decided to ask Parliament, whose extraordinary session opened on Sunday, to vote Mr. Sboul out.

But it is not clear yet whether Parliament could legally debate such a move since the agenda of such sessions is fixed by a royal decree issued in advance.

Other secular deputies said the Brotherhood was unlikely to take any moves in Parliament regarding Mr. Sboul.

"They will not take any serious step. They will only seek to show their supporters that they are unhappy with what happened and they have the guts to challenge the government," a leftist deputy said.

Bahrain appeals anew to Qatar to settle dispute

BAHRAIN (Agencies) — Bahrain on Monday renewed its appeal to Qatar to sign a joint petition asking the World Court to settle their long-running border dispute.

A Foreign Ministry statement said such a petition to the International Court of Justice in the Hague was necessary "to avoid any further delay in solving the differences existing between the two states."

It said that "the State of Bahrain hopes that the State of Qatar will agree to the signature of the special agreement presented to Qatar so that they may go to the International Court of Justice together by means of a joint application."

potentially oil- and gas-rich islands and reefs. "In the absence of a negotiated solution, all matters of difference existing between the two states should be referred to the ICJ jointly by means of a special agreement to reach a final solution which will be binding," the Bahraini statement, carried by the Gulf News Agency, said.

Qatar said on June 6 it would abide by any ruling the World Court might make on their dispute.

Bahrain, which has always maintained that the two sides should go together to the court, wants the court to look at the wider issue of sea and land boundaries while Qatar wants it to focus on a few islands which are at the heart of the row.

Libyan minister urges West to 'open new page'

SIRTE, Libya (Agencies) — Libya's foreign minister urged the United States on Monday to "open a new page" in relations with his country but gave no hint whether he thought two men accused of bombing a Pan Am airliner should be surrendered to the West.

Ibrahim Mohammad Beshari, secretary for foreign liaison, was addressing the General People's Congress, Libya's equivalent of a parliament, which has been charged with deciding whether to hand over the two men for trial in the West.

Mr. Beshari said "basic peoples' conferences" around Libya had affirmed they wanted to normalise relations with all countries including the United States "which we call to dialogue, to respond to this call of reason, to open a new page of relations with Libya in the context of international law."

with Britain and France, the other two Western countries which have accused Libya of involvement in airliner bombings. The United States and Britain are seeking the surrender of the two suspects in the bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, which killed 270 people. They want the suspects tried in either country. France wants to investigate four other Libyans in the 1989 bombing of a French airliner over Niger that killed 170 people.

The General People's Congress, meeting at Sirte, about 400 kilometres southeast of the capital Tripoli, is to decide the suspects' fate.

The congress, which opened on June 13, is expected to end on Tuesday. A decision on the fate of the bombing suspects is expected then. Mr. Beshari criticised Arab countries for adhering to the

(Continued on page 5)

Israeli parties battle for Arab vote

By Said Ghazali
The Associated Press

TAIBE — Abdul Rahman Haj Yehia, a middle-aged school principal with sparkling gray hair, has been busy hanging posters for the Israeli liberal party Meretz on house walls for Tuesday's election.

The poster includes a photo of one of this Arab town's sons, Walid Sadek, a Meretz candidate for parliament. And many people here believe that will spell success for the party among the 13,500 voters of Taibe.

The town was a base for the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality in the last election in 1988. The two Arab parties gained 4,647 votes, compared to only 992 for Ratz and Mapam, which are now part of Meretz.

But many voters here — and in the other Arab towns of Israel — are angry that rancorous quarrels between Arab politicians once again meant that they failed to combine into a single party.

Israel's 400,000 voters could in theory command 18 seats in the 120-member parliament if they could agree on one party, but

they have always split their votes among Arab political leaders and Israeli parties.

The vote reflects the Israeli Arabs' confused loyalties. They are citizens of the Jewish state, but they sympathized with their Palestinian brothers in the occupied territories.

Since Israeli polls do not measure the Arabs, there are no solid hints how they will vote. Abdulrahman Masarweh, a Labour Party campaigner, described the mood among Arab voters this year as "dispirited and grim."

He and others in Taibe said Arabs were discouraged by the failure of their politicians to unite and the feeling that many Israelis now distrust Arabs even more after the Gulf war.

Some said more Arabs will vote for liberal Israeli parties this year to support the peace process. Many also feel a vote for any of the Arab parties is a waste since they are never included in the government.

Also, Muslim fundamentalists among the Israeli Arabs have for the first time urged Arab citizens to vote, which is likely to increase the number of ballots cast.

Most Israeli parties are cam-

paigned hard in the Arab towns in the area of northern Israel known as the triangle. In Taibe, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's Likud Party has opened an office for the first time but is not expected to gain many votes.

Mr. Masarweh, who voted for the Democratic Front four years ago, is campaigning for Labour by telling people that the small Arab parties only have the power to protest, not to achieve results. In the last election, the Arab parties and the Arab-backed communists won only six seats.

Mr. Haj Yehia, the Meretz poster hanger, explained why he believes many in Taibe will vote for the liberal party.

"It puts a left restraint on Labour, prevents the formation of a Likud-led government, and punishes the quarrelling Arab parties for their failure of unity," he said.

But there is another advantage for Meretz, Mr. Sadek, the party's Arab candidate, belongs to the town's largest clan, making up about 17 per cent of the 24,000 population.

"I talk about equality between Arabs and Jews and a two-state

solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict," Mr. Sadek said, explaining the platform he has been presenting in the triangle's villages.

Dr. Zuhair Taibi, who is campaigning for the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, admits there is growing support here for Meretz and the Labour Party, both of which support returning some occupied land in a peace settlement with the Arabs.

But he told a rally that Arabs who vote for an Israeli party are making a mistake. "They are Zionists and they will remain Zionists," he said.

But the mood seems more towards Israeli parties. The collapse of the Soviet Union has undermined Israel's Communist Party — a major vote getter among Arabs — and the other Arab parties are suffering for their disunity.

Abdul Hakim Haj Yehia, a clothes designer who was playing backgammon in a coffee shop, said he would not vote for any of the Arab parties for just that reason.

"The Arabs will never have an Arab political weight," he complained.

Facts and figures

TEL AVIV (AP) — On Tuesday, Israelis go to the polls to elect the 13th Knesset, or parliament. Voters do not cast their ballots for individual candidates but rather for political parties who will fill the 120-member legislature according to the percentage of the vote their party wins.

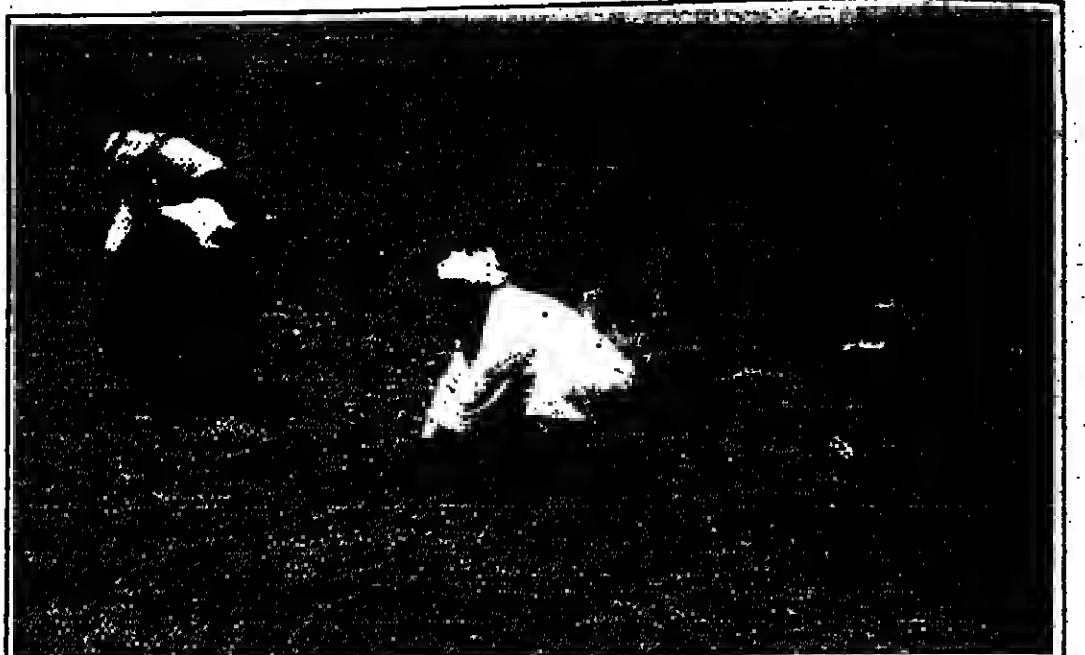
Twenty-five parties are running this time, and each seat is worth about 22,000 votes. But parties must receive at least 40,000 votes, or 1.5 per cent of votes cast, to get in.

There are currently 19 separate parties in parliament.

Since no party has ever won a majority, Israel has been always governed by coalitions with other parties. The leader of the party able to put together a coalition, usually the largest party, will become the prime minister.

Israel also has a president who is elected by the parliament, but his job is largely ceremonial.

There are 3.4 million eligible voters, including 530,000 new voters. Voter turnout has averaged around 80 per cent.



Iraqi farmers at their burnt-out farms in northern Iraq. (Inset) a warplane photographed while flying over northern Iraq (Photos by Cars Hansson)

Journalists confirm Iraqi crops burnt from 'air-provoked' action

By Ica Wabbeh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Amid repeated Iraqi charges that American warplanes are burning crops in northern Iraq, three independent American journalists have just returned from a visit to the Mosul region with proof that the plants had indeed been burnt from up down-wards and warplanes were still criss-crossing Iraq's airspace.

The journalists, two working for the radio programme Sun Radio International in Florida and Washington and one for the Washington weekly Spotlight, are positive that the burning was an air-provoked action, but are cautious to name the perpetrators.

"I've seen similar actions before and from the look of the wheat stalks it was obvious that they had burnt from up down," said Andy Arnold from Spotlight.

However, Mr. Arnold dismissed as a propaganda stunt the Iraqi charges that American planes were responsible for the action.

On June 16, Iraq handed in a protest note to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali saying that U.S. planes had dropped a torch on a grain collection area in Bakhira on June 7, and illuminated fires near a field in the Mahdiyia area on June 9. The note added that on June 10 fire broke out in fields near the village of Tarjila, near the northern province of Nineveh.

Subsequently, an Iraqi government-run newspaper said Washington should pay damages for the destroyed wheat and barley crops.

Conceding that if it was an American action, the burning of crops could have been an act of demoralisation — a "psychological" tactic — Lars Hansson, from the Florida radio programme, dismissed out of hand the idea that Iraqis could have stage-managed it.

"I do not believe they would burn their own crops, especially after the unusual rainy season that helped obtain a good crop," he said.

Having covered Central

America, South East Asia and the Middle East, and working as an investigator of U.S. covert operations, Mr. Hansson asserted he had seen such "psychological" actions before (in Cuba, for example) and this strengthens his conviction that "America could easily have been behind the actions in the Mosul area."

The visit to Iraq by the three journalists lasted for eight days. On June 17, when they were taken 40 kilometres west of Mosul, a day after the field was burnt, warplanes were flying over and Mr. Hansson managed to take a few shots of the planes. "They could have been Turkish, Iraqi, Iranian, American or allied planes," he said, pointing out that even a blowup would not make it possible to distinguish the markings on the plane's fuselage.

"When we go home, we will have experts identify the planes (from the photos taken) since in Iraq it was impossible to do so," Mr. Hansson said, adding that one big question mark on his mind was the presence of "35 to 40 clearly Western European pilots who have descended in the Ishtar (Sheraton) Hotel in Baghdad and we could not even approach them to say hello."

The pilots, who, according to Mr. Hansson, wore khaki uniforms with blue epaulettes and silver stars, "were Dutch, British, German."

"I think the people of Iraq and the rest of the world deserve to know who they are and what they are doing here," said Mr. Hansson, adding that an attempt to contact the U.N. agricultural team in Baghdad "to have some points clarified" came to no fruition. "We were never called back."

Although the journalists were told things through an interpreter, "the villagers we saw seemed perfectly genuine in their discussions and one said they had seen the American flag on the belly of a plane," according to Mr. Hansson, who also said it was impossible for the villagers to

Women set to lose again in Israeli election

By Marjorie Olster
Reuter

TEL AVIV — In the beginning, Israel's socialist pioneers proclaimed women equal to men.

Then came Golda Meir, who took the helm as the Jewish state's first woman prime minister in 1969.

Since she resigned in 1974, it's been all downhill, say Israeli women candidates in Tuesday's general election.

Israel's female population is 2,646,000 — 203,000 more than men. But only nine women sat in the old 120-seat parliament and there is only a slight chance of more being elected this time.

"The question is why we need more women. Because the men haven't done too well lately," said Nomi Chazan, a political

science professor and candidate for the left-wing Meretz party.

The steady rise of the right to power and increasing militarisation of Israeli society has set women back in politics, Ms. Chazan said.

The outgoing government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was dominated by hawkish former generals who led the Jewish state into a string of wars with its guardian ally the United States.

"There is a connection between women's representation and the ideological positions of the parties they are involved in. Right-wing parties have less women's representation than parties of the centre-left," Ms. Chazan said.

Women are virtually unrepresented where it really counts. No female ministers sat in the last

cabinet and only one woman was in the powerful Knesset foreign affairs and defence committee.

But there is a bright spot — two parties, the right-wing Meretz and the Women's Party, are headed by women.

Polls show Meretz, a grouping of three small left-wing parties headed by civil rights champion Shulamit Aloni, will form the third largest bloc after Likud and Labour.

Ms. Aloni has focused her battle for women's rights on ending ultra-orthodox rabbis' exclusive control over marriage under which a wife cannot obtain a divorce without her husband's consent. She has not succeeded.

"As long as the woman is the property of her husband, this is religious slavery," Ms. Aloni said.

Under the last Shamir government her party won equal pay and welfare for women but failed to push through legislation to liberalise abortion.

The women's party, headed by 59-year-old Ruth Resnick, a champion of battered wives, is one of the 25 parties competing but has virtually no chance of winning a parliamentary seat. Its female opponents across the political spectrum want all the major parties to embrace feminist issues.

Yael Dayan, daughter of late war hero Moshe Dayan and a first-time candidate for the Labour Party, said Jewish and Middle Eastern traditions had denied women access to the corridors of power.

Moshe Feldman, the ultra-orthodox Jewish head of the Knesset finance committee, incensed feminists earlier this year by declaring women should not even be allowed to vote, let alone win a parliament seat.

This sort of remark makes many women sigh for the good old days. When Israel was formed in 1948 they had to drive tractors and fight in the army — just like their men. Then they drifted back into their traditional role of homemaker.

Ms. Dayan said: "There were no high-ranking women in the army and as a result people who left the army and walked into politics were men. Everything was in the hands of men and it's very difficult to remove them now."

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Libya blames 17 blast deaths on sanctions

NICOSIA (R) — Seventeen Libyan blast victims perished because United Nations sanctions hampered treatment of their injuries, Libya's official news agency JANA reported. It said the death toll was now 30 and more lives were in danger. The blast devastated the area around an explosives depot near Asawani, 21 kilometres southwest of the capital Tripoli, on Saturday. The agency said many victims were too badly hurt to be treated in Libya and could not be flown abroad because the U.N. has cut all air links in a dispute over aircraft bombings. It said 17 victims died while being taken to Tunisia by road or to Malta by sea rescue speedboat. Most of the dead were women and children, it said. According to the daily newspaper Al Jamahiriya "it would have been possible to save 17 cases, had our Arab brothers not upheld (Security Council) Resolution 748," JANA said.

Yeltsin expected to visit S. Arabia in July

DHAHRAN (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin is expected to visit Saudi Arabia and Egypt in July, authoritative sources in the kingdom said. It will be his first official trip to the region as leader of the Russian Republic. The sources said Mr. Yeltsin's talks in Saudi Arabia would focus on Saudi investment and financial backing for industrial and oil projects in Russia. They said he would also visit Egypt to discuss bilateral relations. The sources did not give other details.

Rabbi Schneerson's condition improves

NEW YORK (AP) — The 90-year-old spiritual leader of the Lubavitcher Jews continued his recovery from gallbladder surgery at Mount Sinai Hospital Sunday. Rabbi Menachem Schneerson remained in the hospital's intensive care unit but was listed in stable and satisfactory condition, said a hospital administrator. She said Rabbi Schneerson's condition was much improved from Saturday. Rabbi Schneerson underwent a 2½-hour operation to remove his gallbladder Thursday after tests revealed the organ was gangrenous. At the hospital and in services at synagogues around the city Saturday, members of the Lubavitch sect of Hasidic Jews marked the Sabbath by praying for their leader's speedy recovery. Hundreds of Lubavitchers also gathered at the sect's world headquarters in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn. Thousands of get-well messages had been received from the U.S. and elsewhere, said a Lubavitcher spokesman. The Lubavitchers, one of several sects of Judaism's ultra-orthodox Hasidic movement, claim a million adherents worldwide, but other estimates put their numbers as low as 100,000.

Infestation in Libya declared eradicated

ROME (AP) — An infestation of the new world screwworm in Libya, which could have spread through Africa and the Middle East, has been eradicated, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said Sunday. The Libyan government was making the announcement at a ceremony in Tripoli, more than a year since the last case of infestation, the Rome-based agency said. The parasite had never been seen outside the Americas until it appeared in Libya in 1988, apparently on sheep imported from South America. The female fly attacks animals with open wounds and, unless treated, cattle can die in a few days. The eradication programme used sterile insect technique that did the United States and Mexico of the pest. Every week for 11 months last year, a chartered DC-8 shipped 40 million sterilised male flies from a plant in Mexico to Libya, where they were dispersed over the infested area, the FAO said. Female flies that mated with the imported, sterile males produced sterile eggs, breaking the life cycle.

Egyptian lawyer jailed for bad cheque

CAIRO (R) — A Cairo court sentenced lawyer Rashad Nabih to three years imprisonment on Monday for writing a bad cheque for 1.54 billion Egyptian pounds (\$460 million) in connection with a massive Islamic banking scandal. Judge Jamal Al Kholi, said Mr. Nabih could pay one million pounds (\$275,000) as an alternative to prison. The cheque was meant to repay some 187,000 depositors in the collapsed Al Rayan Islamic Investment Company. Mr. Nabih, who entered the Rayan case as the lawyer representing the company's chairman, Ahmad Tawfik Abdul Fattah, offered last May to buy Rayan's assets for 1.54 billion pounds on behalf of a mystery investor. He signed the cheque in court in October but on Nov. 11, was remanded in custody, charged with issuing the cheque without funds to cover it. Mr. Abdul Fattah and 12 other people went on trial last February charged with swindling investors out of a total of 1.9 billion Egyptian pounds (\$570 million).

French AWACS monitoring Libya, Yugoslavia

PARIS (R) — French AWACS airborne radars are monitoring aircraft movements in Yugoslavia and Libya to check that United Nations sanctions are being implemented, an air force spokesman said Monday. He said the AWACS were collecting information for French authorities and were not flying missions for international organisations.

Sudanese politician cuts tour

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan's top Muslim fundamentalist politician has returned home after cutting short a foreign tour during which he was assaulted by a Sudanese exile in Canada.

Radio Omdurman said on Monday fundamentalist leader Hassan Abdallah Al Turabi returned to Khartoum Sunday.

Dr. Turabi, head of the National Islamic Front (NIF), was taken to hospital last month with serious head injuries after receiving a karate chop from disident Hashim Badr Eddin.

There was no clear motive for the attack at Ottawa airport by the former bodyguard to a Gulf Arab monarch.

Dr. Turabi is a controversial politician who has made enemies from many Sudanese opposed to the fundamentalist policies of his NIF, banned with other political parties when military leader Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir seized power in 1989.

Many Sudanese are also worried by what they say is Dr. Turabi's growing influence on the Bashir government.

Gen. Bashir says Dr. Turabi has no role in his government and charges the NIF leader of being one of the discredited politicians the military have accused of ruining Sudan's economy.

Nevertheless Gen. Bashir has implemented almost all the policies the NIF said it would introduce if voted to power, notably the adoption of the Islamic penal code.

Palestinian directors launch film festival

PALESTINIAN and Israeli Arab directors are holding their first-ever film festival in East Jerusalem this week, hoping it will be a cornerstone of an independent Palestinian film industry.

The week-long festival, which opened Saturday night, will screen the works mostly of Israeli-born Arabs, like Michel Khleifi, Gazans such as Rashad Masharawi and others born in Jordan or Lebanon, who have been working abroad in Europe and the U.S.

"For many Palestinians, and

especially those involved in journalism, Western television producers' attitudes, although well-meaning, were troubling, says the introduction to the film festival brochure, explaining the need for an independent Palestinian film industry to portray Palestinian life and concerns.

Most of the films deal with various facets of the intifada and political life from an exclusively Palestinian point of view, while some Israeli Arab directors, such as Hanna Elias, provide interesting insights into Israeli Arab

society.

Since the intifada began, Palestinians are said to have become avid watchers of television documentaries about themselves and lately many have become involved in film as a profession, as cameramen permanently stationed in camps and towns, providing unedited film for foreign television companies.

As a result, film today is probably considered a more effective communication medium than art, poetry and theatre.

— The Jerusalem Post.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Les Aventures de Joe
18:10 Les Tortues Ninja
18:30 Marc et Sophie
19:00 News in French
19:15 Varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Acropolis Now
21:10 The Palace Guard
22:00 News in English
22:30 Oscar film "The Country Girl"

PRAYER TIMES
03:59 Fajr
05:20 Sunrise
12:37 Dhuhr
16:18 Asr
19:49 Maghreb
21:24 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swaidah, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be fair and some clouds will appear at various altitudes. Winds will be northwesterly moderate to fresh. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly fresh and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 15 / 27
Aqaba 22 / 35
Deserts 14 / 30
Jordan Valley 21 / 34
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 26, Aqaba 34. Humidity readings: Amman 47 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

man 26, Aqaba 34. Humidity readings: Amman 47 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Salah Al 'Uzoud 649028
Dr. Ghazi Abu Sheikha 752405
Dr. Kayed Halayqa 793522
Dr. Abdul Qader Al Lala 696048
Fina pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 716336
Al Asema pharmacy 670055
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Al Salm pharmacy 626730
Yasoun pharmacy 644945
Shameela pharmacy 676660

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Al Hayek (—)
Al. Sharaa pharmacy (775825)

ZARQA:
Dr. Rabah Al Borini (—)

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 132, 621111, 637177
Fire Brigade 812228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 603800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 610230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaliq Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Akhil Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Samudal 664174
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musaber Hospital 667229
The Islamic, Abdell 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdell 664164
Islem, Al-Mudajjem 77701/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 775111/26
Army, Marha 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information Department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (06)3200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)
06:30 Doha (RJ)
09:30 Muscat (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Aqaba (RJ)
06:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00 Vienna, (RJ)
12:45 Paris, Brussels (RJ)
12:45 Milan, Madrid (RJ)
12:45 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
13:00 Frankfurt (RJ)
13:00 Cairo (RJ)
13:05 London (RJ)
19:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
22:15 Larnaca (RJ)
22:30 Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
06:00 Beirut, Rome (A2)
14:15 Cairo (MS)
15:00 Riyadh (SU)
01:00 Bucharest (RO)

MARKET PRICES
Upstuffer price in \$/kg
Apple (red) 240 / 300
Apricot 240 / 300
Banana 300 / 450
Banana (Muhassar) 550 / 360
Beans 330 / 280
Cabbage 110 / 70
Carrot 240 / 200
Cauliflower 130 / 80
Cucumbers (large) 80 / 40
Cucumbers (small) 130 / 80
Eggplant 240 / 30
Garlic 400 / 250
Lemon 600 / 500
Marrow (large) 80 / 40
Marrow (small) 120 / 60
Onion (dry) 140 / 80
Onion (green) 150 / 180
Orange 400 / 250
Peaches 700 / 530
Pears 330 / 260
Pineapples 450 / 70
Pepper (hot) 320 / 280
Pepper (sweet) 320 / 280
Potato 240 / 180
Sweet Melon 220 / 160
Tomato 110 / 50
Watermelon 110 / 40

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Marrow (large) 80 / 40
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Pepper (hot) 320 / 280
Pepper (sweet) 320 / 280
Potato 240 / 180
Sweet Melon 220 / 160
Tomato 110 / 50
Watermelon 110 / 40

UNRWA session to focus on budget and refugee condition

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — As financial conditions and social hardships worsen and unemployment increases in the Israeli-occupied territories, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) hopes to highlight in a meeting Tuesday with 24 donor countries major initiatives to create self-sufficiency among the Palestinians.

The donor countries make financial contributions to UNRWA which offers health, education and social services to the Palestinians living in the occupied territories, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.

The two-day closed session will focus on both the socio-economic conditions of Palestinians and UNRWA's budget. Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber and UNRWA Commissioner General Ilter Turkmen will open the meeting.

"It is an important meeting as it allows for an informal exchange between the donor countries and UNRWA," Lynn Failing, UNRWA's deputy chief of public information, told the press at a briefing Monday.

Mr. Failing said that the agency, which has increased its in-

come from special contributions for specific projects, is facing budgetary difficulties "because of the natural population increase and the increase of the number of refugees seeking UNRWA's services."

One budgetary problem is the agency's shelter rehabilitation schemes, which build or repair broken-down buildings.

UNRWA will be requesting \$3.9 million for the Gaza Strip from the donor countries, \$2.6 million for the West Bank and \$3.6 million for Lebanon. According to Mr. Failing, this would meet the needs of its more dilapidated buildings. But, he added that although the amount allocated for the West Bank and Gaza Strip would complete 2,000 shelters, 5,000 more would still need to be rebuilt or repaired.

The European Community, the single largest donor to UNRWA's regular budget, announced last week that it was granting \$6.7 million to help build the first major hospital in the Gaza Strip. The hospital will be located near Khan Younis in southern Gaza and its construction will begin early next year. Japan also donated \$6.9 million earlier this month for the purchase of flour for distribution among the Palestinian refugees.

In 1991, Japan's total contribution of over \$27.2 million was the second largest UNRWA received from a government.

In an attempt to highlight the plight and initiatives of the agency to the delegates, UNRWA will show a documentary on UNRWA's income generation programme. Currently in Jordan, after having started in the West Bank, the programme offers about \$4,000 to \$7,000 in loans targeted at small entrepreneurs and medium-scale businesses in order to develop income and infrastructure.

Another documentary will depict conditions of refugee shelters and UNRWA's rehabilitation scheme. "Last year's harsh winter has contributed to their worsening conditions. The conditions are by no means satisfactory," according to Mr. Failing.

Five clippings produced for Cable News Network, World Report on Lebanon and Jordan, returnees from Kuwait and health care in the Gaza Strip will also be seen by the delegates.

During the final session on Wednesday, UNRWA's Gaza field office director will review the current situation in the Gaza Strip. Reports from Tuesday's working group meeting will also be presented.



Scientists from around the world discuss renewable energy resources.

International experts discuss renewable energy resources

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from 15 countries gathered at the University of Jordan Monday for a three-day conference on renewable energy resources, organised in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The delegates are scheduled to review 66 research papers related to energy ranging from solar power and its applications, to wind power, organic gas and other renewable energy sources, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Addressing the opening session, University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh stressed the need for the search of renewable energy sources which can replace traditional sources with the help of a national programme, foreign countries and international organisations.

Dr. Gharaibeh said that the Earth Summit held recently in Brazil sounded the alarm about the dangers inherent in unorganised and rash exploitation of the natural resources. He said such exploitation was detrimental to

the environment and human health.

There were also speeches by a representative of the Industrial Development Bank, the deputy president of the Jordanian Engineers Association and the dean of the Engineering and Technology Faculty at the University of Jordan.

The three officials stressed Jordan's endeavours in dealing with renewable energy resources, the need for Jordan to exploit other forms of energy and to use oil shale found in abundance in the Kingdom.

The conference, according to the preparatory committee, aims at enabling the various delegates to exchange expertise on energy and to help Jordanian technicians and experts acquaint themselves with the latest trends in energy techniques.

Taking part in the meetings are delegates from Iraq, Bahrain, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, India, Pakistan, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Poland and the United States, in addition to Jordan.

All A board! Hijaz RR passenger service resumes

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanian Hijaz Railway Monday announced the reactivation of its Amman-Damascus service between Amman and Damascus as of June 27.

The announcement followed a several year hiatus in its service. Officials said trains will now be leaving Damascus every Monday morning and Amman every Saturday.

In March 1990 Jordanian and Syrian officials agreed to boost cooperation in tourism, including the stimulation of land transport between Amman and Damascus.

The agreement followed a 1989 decision to reactivate the Hijaz Railway for transport between the two countries.

Monday's announcement did not mention how the service would affect the transportation of goods between the two capitals, which has been going on uninterrupted for years.

Jordan is one of the Arab countries that lack proper railway services despite tracks and locomotives, and high demand for rail transport, according to Ministry of Transport officials.

At present the Aqaba Railway Corporation operates a line that carries phosphate produced in the south to Aqaba for export. There is also a line linking Amman with Zarqa and one that goes to Maan. The Zarqa line, however, is sporadic, dependent on the tourist season and excursion trips by schools. The other is inactive.

The Damascus-Amman Hijaz Railway dates back to 1900. With German aid, the Ottomans built the railway linking Istanbul with Hijaz (now in Saudi Arabia) to mainly carry pilgrims to Medina and Mecca.

Saudis bar sheep for poor

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — Saudi Arabia has prevented Jordanian poor from receiving their traditional share of sheep sacrificed by Muslims at this year's pilgrimage in Mecca and Medina, officials said on Monday.

They said the measure was a further sign of the deep strains in Jordanian-Saudi relations after the Gulf war in which Jordan criticised the Saudi-based anti-Iraq alliance.

They have not sent us any of this year's adabi (sacrificed sheep) and I don't think we will get any," a Jordanian official told Reuters. "It seems they want to use anything to hit back at us and express anger at King Hussein, even sacrificed meat."

Saudi embassy officials in Amman were not immediately available for comment. Riyadh, which severed aid to Jordan after the Gulf crisis, has still not returned its ambassador to Amman after recalling him in 1990.

Pilgrims from all over the Muslim World traditionally pay for sheep which they sacrifice in Mecca and give to the poor. Riyadh supervises distribution of the meat to Muslim countries.

Jordanian officials said hundreds of trucks carrying sacrificed sheep passed through Jordan to Syria last week after the pilgrimage ended.

They said none stopped in Jordan, which had been expecting 40,000 sacrificed sheep, the number it received last year shortly after the Gulf war ended.

A Jordanian newspaper columnist on Monday criticised Riyadh for what he called politicisation of aid to the poor.

"The issue of adabi has been transformed from a humanitarian matter that concerns the poor to a political matter that has nothing to do with destitutes," wrote Bader Abdul Haq in Al Rai.

Ensour urges Turkey to import Jordanian goods

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan Monday urged Turkey to increase its imports of Jordanian products in a bid to adjust the trade imbalance.

The call came from Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour at a meeting with Turkish minister of State Erman Sahin, who is accompanied by a delegation of senior Turkish officials in Amman now, visiting to review trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

The review is conducted under the umbrella of the Joint Jordanian-Turkish economic committee.

Opening the first round of talks, Dr. Ensour said Jordan was delighted to witness the reactivation of the committee's work following a four-year break caused by instability in the Middle East.

Noting that the balance of trade between Jordan and Turkey heavily favoured Ankara, the minister said that Turkey can buy more Jordanian phosphate and potash, aluminium fluoride, medicines and veterinary products.

According to Ministry of Industry and Trade official, Jordan last year imported \$57 million worth of Turkish products and exported \$13.7 million worth of phosphate and potash, cigarettes and raw leather.

Dr. Ensour said the joint committee satisfied with what has been achieved in transport between Turkey and Jordan and hopes that more efforts will be made to overcome obstacles impeding the flow of goods between Jordan and Europe through Turkey as well as Turkish goods to other Arab countries through Jordan.

The minister underlined the need for a joint investment company to deal with all these matters and to pave the way for Jordan's participation in an international fair held in Izmir southern Turkey. He also called for increased Turkish expertise to help Jordan in agriculture and in the restoration of Islamic archaeological sites.

The Turkish minister said that his country was ready to help



Above, members of the joint Jordanian-Turkish Economic Committee talk trade. Below, the minister of industry and trade and the Turkish minister of state brief Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker on the day's events (Petra photo)



adjust the balance of trade by facilitating the sale of Jordanian goods in Turkey.

Mr. Sahin said trade fairs could help both countries to increase sale of national products to each other.

The Turkish minister extended an invitation to Jordan to participate in the Izmir fair and called on the joint Jordanian-Turkish chambers of industry and trade to hold meetings to pave the way for future cooperation.

After the initial meeting, both ministers called on Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, who

expressed satisfaction with the committee's progress. The prime minister highlighted the importance of regional cooperation.

The two ministers briefed the prime minister on the talks, which, in addition to trade and the economy, covered tourism, land and air transport, and culture, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Mr. Sahin also had a meeting Monday with Minister of Supply Muhammad al-Sagqaf to discuss Jordan's imports of Turkish meat and wheat and Turkish imports of Jordanian phosphate and potash.

Toxic waste talks to discuss how to dump, store safely

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is taking part in a three-day regional workshop on dangerous industrial waste which opened in Amman Monday. Nine other Arab and foreign countries are also participating.

The organisers said that the delegates were scheduled to discuss ways to dispose of poisonous waste and to safely transport and store such materials.

Addressing the opening session, Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat said that Jordan was looking forward to the implementation of programmes designed to stem pollution through strict control of industrial zones and by proper treatment of solid wastes and fumes from industrial operations. Jordan is going ahead with plans to create industrial and

handicraft zones, coordinating with the various local industries on plans for disposing of and dumping waste, in accordance with recognised specifications and standards, Dr. Tubeishat said.

He added that poisonous waste has become a real "spectre of horror" for people everywhere since it can pollute the environment and endanger people's lives.

Dr. Tubeishat has just returned from the Earth Summit in Brazil which ended with a declaration urging international cooperation in ridding the Earth of pollutants and in making the planet safer.

The dumping of dangerous waste and poisonous materials by the developed countries is threatening all nations, said the minister. Indeed, he added, burying poison in the ground is like creating a cancer that will cause severe

harm to the Earth's natural resources and damage the climate, minister said.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is organising the Amman meetings, through its regional office in Bahrain, together with the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment.

A UNEP delegate reminded the audience of the 1989 Basel agreement on the trans-boundary movement of waste and the dumping of toxins. He urged all concerned parties to take extra care in dealing with such operations and in controlling industrial activities.

The Amman gathering is designed to help find the most appropriate means of disposing of industrial waste, and the UNEP will continue to organise similar meetings and conferences, the UNEP official said.

Scientists agree regional seed sharing secures food

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan gives due attention to the production of improved seeds and hopes to be able to contribute to the establishment of a regional network that will exchange expertise, according to Ghalib Abu Urabi, secretary-general of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Jordan also hopes that sufficient training will be provided to its workers and experts in seed production to help contribute to food security, said Mr. Urabi at the opening of a workshop organised here by the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the German agency for technical cooperation (GTZ).

The workshop entitled Regional Seed Network Workshop will end on June 25 and is being attended by delegates from 12 countries in the West Asian and North African region.

Mr. Urabi said that there was a need for ICARDA to help coun-

tries of these regions exchange expertise and unify their seed testing techniques to promote production.

ICARDA Regional Coordinator Nasri Haddad said that ICARDA was concerned with establishing a regional network and will do all it can to provide training to personnel.

Thirty senior scientists and officials working in seed technology and production are participating in the workshop. They come from Jordan, Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Cyprus and Libya.

The four-day meeting will focus on regional cooperation in seed technology and production, to benefit farmers and will discuss establishing a seed network that will facilitate the exchange of information, materials on seed-testing techniques and standard procedures for high-quality seed production, ICARDA said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of paintings by Muhammad Al Jalous at Bahadur Art Gallery.

★ Art exhibition by Samer Obeidat at the Royal Cultural Centre.

FILMS

★ Documentary film about the Palestinian people and their conditions in the occupied territories and the diaspora at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation — 6:30 p.m.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Luxembourgeois

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein sent Monday a cable to the Grand Duke of Luxembourg to congratulate her in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian government and people on her country's national day. King Hussein wished the duke good health and happiness and the people of Luxembourg further progress and prosperity.

Lower House to meet

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament will hold a meeting Wednesday under the chairmanship of its speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat. The House will resume discussion of the political parties draft law.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1973

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Tolerance is the key

THE ONGOING fighting and killing between individuals and groups of Muslims and Christian Copts in several Egyptian cities and towns should sound the alarm that unless this religious conflict is checked and addressed in a meaningful way, it may snowball into more ominous dimensions. The religious friction between the two faiths had been going on for some time now with no end in sight.

Not that the intensity of this inter-faith fighting is anything near the Lebanese civil war that raged there for more than 15 years and took the lives of hundreds of thousands of Lebanese people. But if this kind of conflict between Muslims and Copts is allowed to fester, the Egyptians may wake up to find themselves on the brink of a major disaster.

Yet the authorities in Cairo appear to want to administer the wrong medicine to a spreading social and political disease. Egyptian Interior Minister Abdul Halim Musa seems to believe that tougher legislation is the answer to combat the new wave of violence. "We must review the legal situation if we want to end extremism and terrorism," he was quoted as telling Parliament Saturday.

While more stringent laws on the kind of "extremism and terrorism" that is going on in Egypt may be one of the ways to deal with the crisis, it is by no means the most effective or enlightened way to do so. The problem in Egypt, as elsewhere in the world where different religions have to exist side by side, is the absence of any determined and affirmative policy by the governments concerned to promote and forge positive religious tolerance based on mutual respect, understanding and unity of purpose.

It might be argued that the present Egyptian government as well as past Egyptian governments have not done everything in their power to promote and encourage religious harmony among the various sectors of the Egyptian people, and when they tried something they made unnecessary mistakes on the way. Whether in the fields of education or quality control of TV soap operas, for instance, Egyptian writers have been identifying many problems which could have contributed to today's religious mess. There has always been an urgent need in Egypt to promote better understanding between Muslims and Copts not by legislation alone but also by sound educational and informational methods that are capable of reducing the conflict to negligible proportions, if not solving it totally.

With religious extremism on the rise in this part of the world, it is about time to pursue new and enlightened policies that are aimed at preempting the kind of civil and religious strife that has hit some countries, including Europe, of late. Such policies should start with educating children at school and not end until society and social values are firmly entrenched in maximum tolerance and mutual understanding.

Egypt obviously has not done its home work in this regard and is looking for shortcuts to deal with its own peculiar situation. The more fortunate among Arab and other countries should therefore draw the necessary conclusions from the Egyptian experience and begin in earnest the effort to build up religious tolerance and cement respect for human rights.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Monday commented on the coming Israeli parliamentary elections noting that no peace can come from the Likud or the Labour Parties, regardless which party wins the coming elections and forms a government in Israel. It should be noted that since Israel is mocking all international principles and refusing to comply with the requirements of a just peace, it is pointless to hope that they will create a climate opportune for peace except in such a manner that would serve the Zionists' interests, said the paper. It said any peace coming from either the Likud or Labour can never be conforming to the right and justice and can never be serving the cause of genuine peace based on international legitimacy. The paper said that the Arab states' problem lies in the fact that they bet on the false hope that the Israelis are willing to grant them back their lands and their rights, said the paper. To make things worse is the fact that the Arab countries are counting on the United States to bring them back their rights and restore their usurped territory at a time when these Arab states realise that it is the United States which is continually encouraging the Zionists to hold on to occupied Arab territory in defiance of the international legitimacy, noted the daily.

THE UNITED States is maintaining its blockade on the port of Aqaba, has decided to suspend promised financial aid to Jordan and is doing all in its power to pressure the Kingdom into complying with its whims and desires, said a columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily. Fahd Al Fanek said that the United States is 100 per cent convinced that Jordan is totally committed to the rules of U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq which are no more needed now that the war is over and Iraq is complying with the U.N. resolutions. The writer said that the Americans are using the embargo as a means to starve the civilian population of Iraq and deprive the sick and old of the necessary medicine and food. Washington, at the same time, is pressuring Jordan into playing a more effective part in the U.S. conspiracy aimed at bringing about the downfall of the Iraqi regime and in placing stooges in Baghdad, linked to Iran, the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Syria, said the writer. He said that though nobody had ever dreamt that Jordan would be the object of such pressure or revenge from the U.S. and its allies, after fully complying with the requirements of the international legitimacy, concerning U.N. sanctions, and after adopting democratic rule and embracing the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace process with Israel, noted the writer. He said that freezing U.S. aid to Jordan and maintaining the blockade on Aqaba can only indicate that the international legitimacy, democracy and human rights are of no value in the eyes of the sole leader of the so-called new world order. It is indeed regrettable and sad, said the writer, to see the United States, the sole superpower in the world, siding with the backward Arab regimes which do not believe in democracy.

The View from Fourth Circle

A very long time ago

LAST week I suggested that the troublesome combination of arrogance, provincialism and sheer power that characterises United States government policies towards the rest of the world will be one of the enduring political dangers facing the next two generations of people, especially in developing countries. I did not expect the United States power structure to be so forthcoming as to provide two very neat examples of what I meant.

Last week, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the United States could apprehend wanted persons in other countries and bring them to the United States for trial, despite the terms of existing bilateral extradition treaties or international law and conventions. The ruling was about a South American national who had been kidnapped by U.S. officials and brought to the U.S. for trial in a drug-related matter, though we already had the precedent of the United States invasion of Panama and the arrest and trial of former Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega.

This is an extraordinarily important signal from the United States power structure that may prove to be a very dangerous precedent, with implications for other parts of the world and other contentious issues. We now face a United States that has taken upon itself the formal role of the world's bailiff — unilaterally identifying suspects it wishes to put on trial, and summarily kidnapping them and bringing them to the United States. Having taken over the role of the United Nations for international peace-keeping in the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis, the United States is now well on its way to usurping the international judicial prerogatives of the World Court.

The political message is both simple and offensive: the interests, inclinations, and sentiments of the United States carry more weight than those of other people — never mind all that stuff about all people being created equal before God — and the United States will willingly disregard and override accepted international legal practices when it decides it is in its national interest to do so. In other words, America and Americans enjoy a greater moral and legal right to justice and to a redress of grievances than do other people. This is now formally and publically mandated by the highest judicial authority in the United States. If we do not like it, there is little we can do about it. Racism and neo-imperial delusions are harsh enemies — but they must be fought, as vigorously in the United States as they have been fought in South Africa and other places where the racism is more overt.

The Supreme Court ruling opens up the possibility of a frightening new world of international brigandage dressed in the legalistic mumbo-jumbo of the U.S. judicial system, and enveloped in the fuddy-duddy moral presumptuousness of a society so contorted by its own problems that it finds it easier to play sheriff than to consult a doctor and heal itself. This ruling may or may not lead to extreme abuses of the existing system of extraditing and trying wanted persons in other countries. It is frightening because of the statement it makes about the self-declared American presumption of political and moral superiority. It is an ominous hint about what we may expect from George Bush's "new world order," for it symbolises the rules of the new game we have entered into. Those who do not play by the rules risk being arrested, boycotted, occupied, bombed, or simply ignored.

What will the United States do next? Kidnap businessmen from the Third World whom it suspects of selling goods to countries under a U.N. trade embargo? Arrest suspected terrorists in foreign countries and put them on a show trial in the United States? Arrest farmers who grow plants used to make drugs that reach the streets of American cities? It is difficult to believe that purely judicial criteria would win the day in such cases, given the recent experience with the trial of the Los Angeles policemen accused of beating Rodney King. And when will the decision to kidnap and try foreign nationals slip into an inclination to do away with the time-consuming legal procedures, in favour of the more dramatic act of simply bombing entire drug-producing regions or illicit trade routes?

This unilateral American usurpation of international legal traditions and treaties was followed a few days later by the equally arrogant statement by the U.S. State Department criticising the meeting in Amman between Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian negotiators at the Middle East peace talks. The State Department deputy spokesman said that "we've repeatedly stated that the PLO is not part of the peace process that we've helped to construct ... and thus we're troubled by the meeting." The American ambassador in Israel followed up a few days later by suggesting the meeting in Amman was "unwise."

Is this a preview of the creeping audacity that we may expect from the United States in months and years to come? The Supreme Court ruling was a clear decision to assert the supremacy of U.S. interests and judicial dictates over the rights of other

countries and individuals. The statement criticising the gathering of senior Palestinians strikes me as perhaps even more sinister, for it presumes to dictate to small, unpowerful nations the direction and nature of their domestic political contacts. It follows a clear pattern that we have watched unfold for the last two years: a pattern by which the United States determines which countries may or may not obtain nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, which countries may or may not provide their citizens with the judicial protection that is one of the main reasons for a sovereign state, which countries may or may not preserve their environments and safeguard their biodiversity, and, now, which countries may or may not hold meetings between their leaderships and their political representatives to negotiations formally sanctioned and attended by the United Nations.

Where will this trend of action by the United States ultimately lead to? It's hard to say right now, but the process is becoming increasingly clear and disquieting. One hopes that enough reasonable people and states around the world will recognise the gravity of the process underway, and work together to reassert the rule of law as the basis for relationships among sovereign states and their nationals. With every passing month, the so-called "new world order" looks more and more like degenerating into a 19th century-style orgy of narcissistic chest-pounding and imperial arrogance.

On April 13, 1991, immediately after the end of the Gulf war, George Bush told an audience of military personnel: "Never before has the world looked more to the American example. Never before have so many millions drawn hope from the American idea."

Today, in June 1992, never have so many millions around the world watched the American ideal distorted so grievously, and shuddered in silent disquiet about the potential for runaway gangsterism by a single state so intoxicated by its own power and self-imagery that it can no longer recognise the difference between adhering to the sanctity of human morality and trampling over it in drunken aggrandisement and self-delusion. The line between law and lawlessness owes much to the legacy of American nation-building in the 18th century. But that was a very long time ago.

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Likud-Labour coalition on the cards

By Robert Mahoney

Reuter

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — Before campaigning started, Israel's general election on Tuesday was billed as a watershed.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Gulf war had ended the United States to end Israel and its most implacable Arab foes to the peace table. The Israeli voter was going to pronounce on the "big issues" — the fate of Arab lands occupied since 1967, relations with Arab states and Washington, Israel's security and role in the Middle East.

It has not happened. The campaign has been one of the duller in decades.

The old men who dominate the arid political landscape have followed the old, well-trodden paths, differing not so much in their destination, a strong secure

Israel, but in the route towards it.

The cold public manner of the main contenders, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, 76, and Labour leader Yitzhak Rabin, 70, have kept many Israelis away from their vote-catching rallies. At home they can switch to a new second channel and cable TV instead of watching the once eagerly-followed party political broadcasts.

The TV battles for mainstream votes have been muted. Even the sniping has been from the fringes — anti-Arab Rabbi Moshe Levinger could be seen nightly firing a pistol at some unknown target, presumably keeping the streets of the occupied West Bank safe for settlers like himself.

The country's 3.4 million eligible voters have looked in vain for detailed policy platforms from the main parties, Mr. Shamir's

ruling Likud and opposition Labour.

How each would precisely handle peace negotiations, a faltering economy and a drop in Russian immigration has been shrouded in a deliberate fog.

Mr. Shamir and Mr. Rabin seem to have blurred their differences in an attempt to secure the vital middle-ground vote.

Mr. Shamir's campaign speeches muted some of the most strident elements of Likud philosophy such as settling Jews on Arab lands captured in the 1967 war. During the campaign he stopped the setting up of new settlements, a policy which has helped chill relations with the U.S. Israel's military and economic lifeline.

Mr. Rabin has clouded his stand on settlements. He has promised to avoid "political" settlements in densely-populated

areas which only provoke the Arabs and Americans. But he would retain the right to put up "security" settlements along the borders with Arab states.

The campaign's set piece, a televised Shamir-Rabin debate, was less a clash of ideas, than two well-rehearsed monologues by old-time political sparring partners.

It is as if both leaders see the election throwing them back into a unity government. Mr. Rabin, former war hero and prime minister, served as defence minister under Mr. Shamir in the last half of the 1980s.

The two seem to get on. They kept above the mid-slinging and personal jibes which marked the start of the campaign, never attacking each other head-on.

A Labour spokesman confirmed reports that Mr. Shamir had shown Mr. Rabin secret

documents on the Middle East peace talks — something Mr. Shamir would never have done with Shimon Peres, the "dove" Rabin toppled as Labour leader in February.

"I don't negotiate or rule out the possibility of a unity government," Mr. Shamir told Maariv newspaper last week, acknowledging that a second marriage of convenience with Labour was on the cards after two years of cohabiting with the extreme right.

The far right quit Mr. Shamir's coalition of religious and nationalist parties over the U.S.-sponsored peace talks.

Opinion polls show Mr. Rabin is more popular than Mr. Shamir. They also show neither can win an outright majority in the 120-seat parliament under Israel's proportional representation system.

"It's all about bloc-building again, getting the 61 blocking mandate," said Hanan Crystal, a commentator with Hadashot newspaper. "Labour needs the (Israeli) Arab vote to block the Likud ... Likud needs the religious parties."

"At the end of the campaign we are back to where we were at the start, the polls showing Labour with 40 to 44 seats and Likud with 30 to 35," he told Reuters. Both had 38 in the outgoing parliament.

The price demanded by the small parties to join a left or right coalition could prove too high.

That would lead to a unity government either with the pre-1986 rotating after two years, as in 1986 between Mr. Peres and Mr. Shamir, or with the stronger party keeping the leadership for the entire four-year mandate.

Czechs, Slovaks divorcing after 74 years of marriage

By Allison Smale

The Associated Press

VIENNA, AUSTRIA — After nearly 74 years of an often-rocky marriage, Czechs and Slovaks appear headed for a messy divorce, the trauma of life apart, and potential trouble with the neighbours.

Born of 19th-century nationalism, separated by Nazism and put back together under the communists, Czechoslovakia has reflected the political philosophies that have wreaked havoc on Cen-

tral and Eastern Europe for almost 100 years.

Now, it is proving unable to survive the struggles for national identity sweeping the region since communism fell in 1989.

Unlike Yugoslavia and parts of the old Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia is not expected to dissolve in violence.

But the breakup poses dangers for both Czechs and Slovaks, and for Europe as a whole.

Czechs will be threatened with more dominance, at least economically, by powerful neighbour

Germany.

Slovakia faces tensions with Hungary over the rights of 600,000 ethnic Hungarians, more than 10 per cent of its population of 5 million.

Both peoples face the economic and emotional trauma of a split. Europe and the world, so far complacent about the Czechoslovak divorce, face the emergence of another two states struggling on the international stage.

If they split, both Czechs and

Slovaks will win world recognition. However, both may find it hard to get the investment needed to create stability.

The Czechs, who outnumber Slovaks 2 to 1, are wealthier and worldwide, and have used their manufacturing skills and centuries-old place in European culture to advantage since 1989.

Tourists and businesses flock to the Czech capital, Prague. More than 90 per cent of foreign investment since 1989 has gone to the Czech lands of Bohemia, Moravia and part of Silesia.

But 80 per cent of that cash is German. Alone, the Czechs will face pressure from the 3 million ethnic Germans expelled at the end of World War II for restoration of their property.

The legacy of communism also haunts Czechs. Vital gas and oil still comes from pipelines running from Russia and Ukraine through Slovakia.

The Slovaks, traditionally more rural and Roman Catholic, face even more economic disruption from the split.

Vladimir Meciar, Slovak victor of this month's elections, says his people are ready for more hardship — even though they already are hurting badly from the capitalist reforms of Czech election victor Vaclav Klaus.

That is the price they will pay for a separate identity they knew only in a dubious Nazi puppet state in World War II.

"Czech politicians insist that Czechoslovakia be maintained, and for them that's enough," Mr. Meciar said last week. "Slovaks say we have no Slovakia under such an arrangement ... and that's not enough for us."

A separate Slovakia would face Ukraine to the east, Poland to the north and a potentially unfriendly Hungary to the south.

Most Slovaks did not vote for Mr. Meciar, just as most Czechs did not vote for Mr. Klaus.

The two leaders have thus tossed ultimate responsibility for the split to their regional parliaments. Like divorce courts, the legislatures face a painful settlement battle.

LETTERS

Funeral deserved coverage

To the Editor:

We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Jordan Times for its coverage of the passing of Mr. Ahmad Qataish Al Azaideh, whose loss was great both for Jordan and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Since the news of Mr. Azaideh's death appeared most prominently on the front page of the Jordan Times, however, we would have liked to see the same coverage for his funeral, which turned out to be a truly national and Islamic rally.

The Muslim Brotherhood, Amman.

True and simple

To the Editor:

Since Iraq invaded Kuwait, comparisons have been made by many people, from President Bush on, between Saddam Hussein and Adolf Hitler. Of course most of this has been merely hype and propaganda designed to work people up for the war and justify the subsequent attack; but from a historic perspective of facts and characters a comparison could be made between the two leaders.

Saddam Hussein was provoked into war because he was well on the way to becoming an important world leader. This could not be allowed to happen. Any real leadership in the world, as it exists today, is forbidden; it would be considered a personality cult and everyone knows that personality is out and the inhumanity of the international bureaucrats is in.

All the talk of aggression against Kuwait, the threat to Saudi Arabia, the price of oil, etc., were only rationalisations and abstractions.

But the same thing was true of Hitler. He was eclipsing Roosevelt as a world leader and had to be stopped. This was the reason for World War II. Everything else was only a side show. And so Hitler took out his frustration and revenge on the Jews, and Saddam Hussein did the same with the oil wells of Kuwait. It's as simple as that.

John Haynes, 514 Monticello Ave., Jefferson, LA 70121, USA.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.



Negotiators aim for real progress

(Continued from page 1)

between us and the Palestinian side are excellent," Dr. Musasher said. "And as the negotiations proceed, we find everyday that this coordination is becoming stronger."

Dr. Ashrawi said joint working groups would continue to meet regularly to discuss the bilateral and multilateral talks. She added that there "will be a coordinating committee to deal with specific suggestions that came out that need further exploration."

She described Jordanian-Palestinian coordination as "very special, very detailed, very intensive and quite productive."

However, the spokespersons said that coordination among the Arab parties involved in the peace talks was lacking and that the joint delegation decided to work together to improve Arab coordination.

"We both agreed that we would work together very intensively in order to improve qualitatively the nature of Arab coordination," Dr. Ashrawi said, adding that Arab coordination "can bear a lot of improvement."

Palestinian and Jordanian negotiators have privately complained that Syria was not coordinating sufficiently with the joint delegation, something that was clear with the Syrian boycott of the multilateral talks.

A Palestinian official, who did not want to be identified, told the Jordan Times that while the Jordanians and Palestinians were anxious to achieve progress in the negotiations, Syria was in no hurry to do so.

"We need to show our people that there is progress one year after the negotiations started in Madrid," the Palestinian source said. "And in order to reach this goal, intensive Arab coordination is needed and the Syrians don't feel it is necessary to speed up matters."

The Palestinian delegation is aiming to achieve a Palestinian interim self-government arrangement (PISGA) in October, as stipulated in the American letter of assurances issued prior to the

launching of the peace process.

The sources said that if a PISGA was not achieved within the time frame of next October, the leadership and the delegation would lose credibility among the Palestinian people and that the opponents to the peace talks would have a "real weapon to fight us with."

Following Monday's meeting, Dr. Ashrawi affirmed that both the Jordanian and Palestinian sides "feel it is very important to intensify the negotiations and to achieve specific and concrete results" within the timeframe specified for the first phase of negotiations.

"We feel that all efforts have to be extended in order to have ongoing negotiations, intensive negotiations and genuine progress on the ground because we take the timeframe extremely seriously," Dr. Ashrawi stressed.

Dr. Musasher also said that the negotiations in Rome would take a different form than that of Washington, where the four earlier rounds were held.

"We expect that these negotiations (in Rome) will take place on a more continuous basis than what happened in Washington where we had only very short periods of negotiations followed by long recess periods," Dr. Musasher told the press.

According to Dr. Ashrawi, the Jordanian-Palestinian meeting discussed:

— Consolidating and developing the substance and mechanism of coordination;

— Reviewing the Palestinian and Jordanian strategies and positions, of which neither spokesperson would reveal the details;

— A mechanism for further coordination on specific issues;

— Arab coordination and the relationship with the co-sponsors and international community;

— "We worked out issues pertaining to both the bilateral and multilateral negotiations," Dr. Ashrawi added, "and on how to consolidate the positions, to coordinate it and to enhance the political relationship between both the bilateral and multilateral negotiations."

Likud, Labour neck and neck

(Continued from page 1)

issues were not related to geography.

Speaking to reporters, Dr. Ashrawi, who did not seem surprised by the findings of the survey, described the Israeli military establishment as "the best people who understand that security depended on reaching genuine peace rather than through illegal acquisition of land, domination and military solutions."

The findings of the survey, published in Israeli papers on Sunday, showed that 68 per cent of retired officers believed that Israel should give up the occupied territories in exchange for peace, while 31 per cent favoured annexation of the occupied territories.

Dr. Ashrawi blamed Israeli politicians for manipulating the issue of security "for the sake of justifying the acquisition of land."

She said that the people who were directly involved with the military and security issues had always known that security did not depend on geography, but rather "on reaching genuine agreements and genuine peace."

In a reaction to the findings of the survey, Dr. Ashrawi stressed that the Israeli military establishment had been calling for a peaceful settlement "that will be a source of security rather than creating further instability," through illegal acquisition of land.

The military knew, Dr. Ashrawi said, "that security depends on reaching genuine peace that deal with the causes of conflict and instability rather than with either military solutions, with domination or with the acquisition of land."

The final battle in the election campaign was fought in a crowded Sephardic slum where the Labour Party tried to steal away backers from Likud.

Mr. Rabin and popular Likud lawmaker Benjamin Begin both wound up the campaign in Tel Aviv's Hatikva area, home to poor Jews of Middle Eastern origin who helped bring Likud to power 15 years ago.

Mr. Rabin, a war hero and former prime minister, has been pushing to wean away the Sephardis by blaming Mr. Shamir for the faltering economy and 11 per cent unemployment rate.

In Hatikva, where gains made under Likud rule are beginning to erode, the economy is a major issue.

A smattering of Rabin posters indicates at least some small gain in the Likud bastion where Labour never tried to open an office until this year.

At the party office, Labour publicist David Ziso admitted Mr. Rabin faced a tough fight, likening the race to a football

rivalry where fans have fierce loyalties.

"To cross the lines may be a little too much for some people," he said.

Hatikva resident Rachel Belkin said her family of Likud backers was split this year, with herself and a brother switching to Labour and another brother remaining loyal.

She said of the Likud voter: "He says the very thought of putting a Labour slip in the ballot box makes his hands shake."

In Israel, voters cast ballots for parties, not individuals. No party has ever won a majority, meaning the country is governed by coalitions cobbled together once the vote determines how many parliament seats each party won.

In the outgoing government Labour has 30 seats and Likud 37, but Likud has governed with far-right and religious support.

Two surveys published in Yedioth Ahronoth gave Labour a blocking majority of 61 to 64 seats, including Meretz and Arab parties.

Mr. Rabin has pledged not to include Arabs in his cabinet, but these results could block a Likud coalition and allow Labour to woo the religious parties that always held the balance of power.

A third poll showed the Labour side ahead, but without enough to lead Likud. A survey in the daily Hadaashot showed right- and left-wing blocs tied at 55 seats each.

The polls have often proved wrong since they do not survey major portions of the electorate, including recent immigrants, soldiers on duty, and the 11 per cent of the 3.4 million voters who are Arab.

This year the immigrant vote could be decisive, since there are about 300,000 voters among newcomers, most from the former Soviet states.

Soldiers in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and in South Lebanon began voting Monday so their ballots can be counted with those cast Tuesday. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (0400-1900 GMT) Tuesday. The voting age is 18.

Libya

(Continued from page 1)

sanctions, but thanked Egypt and others for their assistance during the crisis.

"Despite our bitterness, we must look at what some brothers have done to help us. We thank them, especially Egypt headed by President Hosni Mubarak, and the secretary general of the Arab League," he said.

Libyan government newspapers launched an angry campaign against the Arab countries for observing the sanctions. They also attacked Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi for his pursuit of the "mirage" of Arab unity.

PoW issue stirs U.S. election campaign, world politics

By Jim Wolf
Reuter

WASHINGTON — Suggestions that U.S. prisoners-of-war may be alive in Russia have stirred up both the U.S. election campaign and Washington's international relations.

Emotion surrounding "MIAs" (Missing In Action) has heated up the campaign, particularly in view of longstanding allegations by uncredited independent candidate Ross Perot that U.S. officials had covered up evidence that American PoWs were left behind after the Vietnam war.

A discovery now that Vietnam prisoners were still being held would suggest the government

had not done enough, and could haunt President George Bush in the campaign.

Mr. Perot, citing fears of attacks from both Democrats and Republicans, cancelled a June 30 appearance before a Senate committee in which he had been due to testify on his two decades of involvement on behalf of missing Americans.

"Upon careful reflection, I have decided it would do a grave injustice to the MIAs and to their families to have a hearing on this important matter ... anytime before the November election," Mr. Perot wrote to panel chairman John Kerry.

Vice President Dan Quayle

blasted the cancellation, saying it "hinders on irrational behaviour."

Unanswered questions about the 2,266 Americans still listed as missing from the Vietnam war remain the chief obstacle to normal ties with Vietnam.

Last week, Russian President Boris Yeltsin became the latest politician to set off powerful shockwaves in the issue and to demonstrate its enormous geopolitical impact.

On his way to his first formal summit with Mr. Bush, Mr. Yeltsin told the NBC television network that apparently some Americans captured during the Vietnam war had been sent to

Soviet labour camps and might still be alive.

Three days earlier, in a letter to the Senate Select Committee investigating cases of missing Americans, he disclosed that the former Soviet Union held hundreds of Americans during and after World War II, including 12 who survived being shot down in the early 1950s.

Then, at the emotional high-point of an address to the U.S. Congress on Wednesday, the Russian president vowed to find any surviving U.S. PoW and "return him to his family."

During his U.S. visit, Mr. Yeltsin accused former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, a longtime rival, of having known and lied about American PoWs, a charge Mr. Gorbachev hotly denied as an outrage meant to defame him.

Mr. Yeltsin's comments on Vietnam-era PoWs were confusing and at times contradictory, but they were a masterful way of

reaching into the American psyche.

"He's out-performing Perot," said H. Bruce Franklin, a Rutgers University Professor of American Studies and author of the 1992 book "M.I.A. or Mythmaking in America."

Mr. Franklin, whose book is subtitled "How and why Belief in Live PoWs has Possessed a Nation," argued that Mr. Yeltsin, like Mr. Perot, seized the issue to accomplish key goals and portray himself in a certain light.

"It's just the same kind of cynical strategy that other folks have used," he said in an interview.

Voicing an opinion privately shared by many U.S. officials, Mr. Franklin said Mr. Yeltsin's comments, taken as a whole, suggested a calculated strategy to discredit and undermine forces in Russia, including Communist Party and KGB remnants hostile to him.

Mr. Yeltsin reaped a goodwill bonanza with his forceful presentation to Congress, where a bill authorising more aid to the former Soviet Union is bogged down in election-year politics.

But his comments of PoWs seemed certain to disrupt, at least temporarily, the slow process of setting up normal ties between the United States and Vietnam, already problematic in an election year.

Senator John McCain, an Arizona Republican who is himself a former PoW in Vietnam, called on Tuesday for suspending steps towards normalisation, suggesting Hanoi must have been involved in transferring any Americans to the Soviet Union.

Vietnam has always maintained it released all American captives within the specified 60-day period after signing the 1973 peace accord that ended direct U.S. military involvement in the war.

Siberia's ice-bound prison camps hold last terrible secret

By James Flannery
Reuter

MAGADAN, RUSSIA — The Gulag network of Soviet penal camps retains a last terrible secret: How many millions died?

The superficial accountability of tyranny is on display in a museum here. Ledgers in copperplate handwriting record shipments of prisoners to northeast Siberia over the decades.

But the nightmare of their fate is absent from the official documents. It can scarcely be imagined on rare visits to the grim sites of old forced-labour camps near the Arctic Circle.

Historians still argue about the toll of the Gulag, trading numbers, statistics about millions of deaths, in a debate that often seems to boil down to whether Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler or Soviet dictator Josef Stalin was the greater tyrant.

No record apparently exists of the victims. The bulk of the prison settlements remain, some as big as towns, deep in the rugged Kolyma mountains.

The jailers finally went off to pensions and warm southern retreats, say Gulag researchers.

A minority of slave workers survived. Hardly any escaped.

Many of the prisoners died where they worked: mining gold, felling 300-year-old trees in the world's largest coniferous forests and trying to farm in permafrost — the icebound, steel-hard bogland that covers much of Siberia.

British historian of the terror, Robert Conquest, says three million died in this region, described

by Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn as "the pole of ferocity" of the Gulag.

Kolyma, administered from Russia's remotest city Magadan, is claimed to be the coldest place in the northern Hemisphere. Wretched, haggard armies of toilers filled camps throughout the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.

Black and blistered from frostbite, they worked until temperatures plunged beyond minus 50 Celsius.

Magadan's museum displays the carefully-kept records of Dalstroy, the far eastern building company which set up the camp system in this part of Russia.

Some of the administrators were themselves jailed or shot as "spies" as Stalin's purges were convulsed by paranoia. The purges reached their height in 1937-39 when millions of people

were executed or shipped to Siberia in cattle wagons marked "perishable goods."

"Not only were executioners executed," says one writer, "but the same fate befell the executioners of the executioners. Such was the glue of terror binding this enormous structure."

The ledgers show up to 250,000 prisoners were working in the Kolyma area in any one year.

A Romanian, Michael Solomon, who survived Kolyma, has described seeing an immense array of captives: "Like armies on a battlefield ... 100,000 were part of the scene before us, endless columns of women, of cripples, of old men and even teena-

gers."

The world knew nothing of this. Representing a wartime ally, U.S. Vice President Henry Wallace visited Magadan in 1944 and was shown only model "Potemkin" villages where heroic, free workers conquered new frontiers. Survivors say the visit became a bitter joke in the camps.

American lend lease supplies often wound up in the camps. You can see the remains of U.S. flourbags in the disused kitchens. American-built trucks traversed the rugged Kolyma highway.

Russian poet Varlam Shalamov, who also survived Kolyma, described how an American bulldozer transferred undecaying corpses from six years in the permafrost to a stone-lined mass grave.

"All of our loved ones who died in Kolyma, all those who were shot, beaten to death, sucked dry by starvation, can still be recognised: even after tens of years. There were no gas furnaces in Kolyma. The corpses wait in stone, the permafrost," he wrote.

Such mass graves apparently exist throughout an uncharted wilderness of granite, snow and forest. The skeletons that shock visitors today come from shallow, windswept burial places.

A Moscow writer with access to official files has said there were 12 million people in labour camps when Stalin died in 1953, about midway between the varying estimates.

Mr. Solzhenitsyn has accused Stalin of responsibility for 66 million deaths. Mr. Conquest put the total camp population at about 20 million, a figure survivors in Magadan accept.

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Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 19.6.1992	Tokyo Close Date 22.6.1992
Sterling Pound	1.8585	1.8548
Deutsche Mark	1.5743	1.5753
Swiss Franc	1.4200	1.4233
French Franc	5.2985	5.3018
Japanese Yen	127.05	127.47
European Currency Unit	1.3030	1.3028

* Unit Per \$100
** European Opening @ 8.00 a.m. GMT

Currency	1 MONTH	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.81	3.87	4.00	4.37
Sterling Pound	9.81	9.87	9.81	9.68
Deutsche Mark	9.62	9.62	9.62	9.56
Swiss Franc	9.12	9.06	8.87	8.62
French Franc	10.00	10.00	10.00	9.87
Japanese Yen	4.62	4.50	4.37	4.37
European Currency Unit	10.37	10.37	10.31	10.25

Commodity	USD/100g	100g/USD	100g/USD	100g/USD
Gold	342.35	6.60	Silver	4.05

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6750	0.6770
Sterling Pound	1.2999	1.2961
Deutsche Mark	0.4274	0.4285
Swiss Franc	0.4732	0.4756
French Franc	0.1270	0.1276
Japanese Yen	0.8296	0.8317
Dutch Guilder	0.3794	0.3813
Swedish Krona	0.1183	0.1189
Italian Lira	0.0565	0.0568
Belgian Franc	0.02086	0.02096

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	1.7000	1.7000
Japanese Yen	0.0085	0.0087
Saudi Riyal	0.1797	0.1815
Kuwait Dinar	—	—
Qatari Riyal	0.1830	0.1840
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2000
Israeli Sheqel	1.7250	1.7300
QAR Dirham	0.1830	0.1840
Greek Drachma	0.3560	0.3580
Cypriot Pound	1.4950	1.5150

Index	20.6.1992 Close	21.6.1992 Close
All-Share	143.03	143.06
Banking Sector	104.41	104.12
Insurance Sector	120.44	120.30
Industry Sector	197.52	198.09
Services Sector	180.02	179.60

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

One Sterling	1.8585/95	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1965/70	Canadian dollar
	1.5710/20	Deutschmarks
	1.7690/710	Dutch guilders
	1.4162/72	Swiss francs
	32.30/34	Belgian francs
	5.2870/920	French francs
	1188/1190	Italian lire
	127.25/35	Japanese yen
	5.6715/65	Swedish crowns
	6.1435/85	Norwegian crowns
	6.0500/50	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	\$342.50/\$342.50/343.00	

Battered Philippines faces tough road to economic recovery

MANILA (R) — The battered Philippine economy faces a tough road to recovery and cannot rely on foreign creditors to bail it out, according to a government report.

Philippine business leaders are pressing General Fidel Ramos to implement bold measures to revive the stagnant economy and catch up with Manila's southeast Asian neighbors.

A chronic electric power shortage and a severe shortage of funds are critical problems.

Outgoing Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislao said foreign debt was no longer a major burden on the economy.

"Investments and exports — that's where the real growth is," he told reporters.

Despite the launching of a \$10 billion aid programme designed to underpin democracy after the ousting of dictator Ferdinand Marcos, the government report shows that Manila paid back far more to creditors than it received.

The heavily-indebted country paid out \$8 billion more to foreign creditors than it received in new borrowing over the past six years, and the government expects aid flows to shrink further.

The report forecast that external financing available to the Philippines from major donor countries and commercial banks would fall.

To compensate, the Philippines must boost export earnings and receipts from its large overseas labour force, attract extra foreign investment and allow the peso to depreciate, it said.

The report did not explain why aid flows could contract, but analysts said the Philippines could expect lower levels because of increased competition for funds from eastern Europe.

Reduced interest in the country following the withdrawal of U.S. forces by the end of 1992 could also staunch aid flows.

The anticipated decline will put renewed pressure on the already constricted budget as the government tries to cope with a chronic electric power shortage and worsening infrastructure, and has to pay out more for defence following the U.S. withdrawal.

The report shows that under President Corason Aquino, Philippine external debt rose to \$30 billion by the end of 1991.

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — The Nikkei Average tumbled 598.65 points to 15,921.22 in thin trade. Investors are disappointed that officials have not come up with policies to help the economy quickly.

SYDNEY — The All Ordinaries Index shrugged off a steep slide in Tokyo, gaining 2.4 points to 1,636.3.

HONG KONG — Shares closed firmer in quiet trade but profit-taking set in during the afternoon to pare earlier gains. The Hang Seng Index ended 32.24 points up at 5,819.94.

SINGAPORE — The Straits Times Industrials followed Tokyo's downward lead, closing 10.19 lower at 1,488.78.

BOMBAY — Stockbrokers continued their boycott of trading into the second week as they awaited a court verdict on unfreezing shares of leading broker Harshad Mehta, centre of India's worst financial scandal.

PARIS — Lingering unease about corporate profits and a poor performance by foreign markets drove the Paris Bourse to a new three-month low. The CAC-40 Index lost 28.15 to finish at 1,885.77.

NEW YORK — U.S. chips stayed moderately weaker in late morning, but shares held above their session lows. The Dow slipped about 16 to 3,269.

LONDON — The FTSE 100 index closed sharply down, just 0.2 points above the session low. A heavy fall in the Dow and lower FTSE futures added to pressure on share prices. The FTSE closed down 34.5 at 2,550.3.

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U.S. outlines new plan to revive merchant marine

WASHINGTON (AP) — Transportation Secretary Andrew Card has outlined a seven-year plan to revive the rapidly shrinking U.S. merchant fleet, including up to \$250 million in subsidy payments.

At the heart of the 16-point package is a proposal to make millions of dollars in payments to the operators of as many as 74 U.S. flag ships in exchange for guarantees the vessels would be available for immediate seafair service in a national emergency.

Mr. Card said that to promote efficiency and encourage productivity increases, the payments would be set at \$2.5 million for each ship in the first two years, phasing down to \$1.6 million a ship in the last year.

The package was outlined by Mr. Card in testimony before the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on the merchant marine. It includes legislative, regulatory and administrative changes intended to help U.S. ship operators and shippers compete more effectively.

Mr. Card said the Bush administration decided the subsidy payments were necessary "because the other initiatives and reforms could not overcome the cost advantages of operating ships under foreign flags."

"Lower foreign wages and foreign subsidies contribute to the problem," he said.

"This is a package that will allow us to have a U.S. flag fleet competing viably into the next century," Mr. Card said. "And it recognizes that there are national security interests that are complementary to the preservation of a U.S. flag fleet."

The U.S. merchant marine industry has long been in a state of decline.

"America was once the world's leading maritime nation, but today's privately owned U.S.-flag merchant fleet is the 16th largest with only 393 seagoing ships," Mr. Card said. He noted that in 1960 there were more than 100,000 merchant seamen while in 1990 that had dropped to about 27,000.

"With no policy changes, the fleet will shrink to 117 ships by the end of the century," Mr. Card said.

Mr. Card said the new payment programme will differ in significant ways from the current "operating-differential subsidy" programme which will be permitted to expire.

Unlike the old programme U.S. operators will be able to purchase vessels worldwide, and operate them anywhere in consort with foreign-flag feeder ships.

Other steps in the Card plan include helping U.S. operators obtain modern ships by broadening an existing tax-deferral programme to help accumulate the money needed for shipbuilding.

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Bahrain stock exchange to list foreign firms soon

MANAMA (R) — Bahrain's stock exchange hopes to begin listing foreign firms during the second half of 1992 as part of its ground-breaking plans to boost share trading on the Gulf bourse.

Stock exchange head Fawzi Behzad told reporters he had received many enquiries from international firms interested in listing their shares on Bahrain's bourse, which opened three years ago.

He said his board of directors were studying detailed regulations for the step, initially planned for last January. No reasons were given for the delay, which is not seen as unusual.

"I think now we are ready and I hope before this year ends we will see it happen. We have received so many enquiries — most of them (foreign firms) are waiting for the regulations before deciding," Mr. Behzad said.

Mr. Behzad said officials were also preparing a system which would allow foreign and local debt securities to be traded on Bahrain's exchange, which has 30 listed firms and paid-in capital of about \$2.4 billion.

He said he hoped the move would encourage Bahraini companies to begin issuing debt instruments to raise capital, which they are allowed to do under a law passed in 1975.

Bahraini officials were also studying proposals — already approved by the exchange — for the creation of mutual trust funds which would indirectly allow foreigners to trade in stock of local companies, he said.

Bahrain, the Middle East's main financial centre, broke new ground in 1990 by deciding to allow investors from outside the Gulf to trade shares from Bahrain-based Arah Banking Corporation on its bourse.

It is also the only state in the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council which allows Gulf nationals to trade local shares.

Official figures show share prices on Bahrain's exchange rose by an average of 30 per cent since June 1990. They plummeted following Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait but have since recovered and climbed well above pre-crisis levels.

Mr. Behzad attributed the gains to improved company results, and the positive regional business climate which followed the end of the Gulf war in February 1992.

Bahrain's index, based on 1,000 points in June 1990, hit a peak of 1,465 last Jan. 9. It has since declined to 1,313 points to a normal seasonal trend.

Figures released last week showed activity on the Bahrain exchange fell in 1991, with a total of 78 million shares worth 39.5 million dinars (\$105 million) traded, compared with 98.5 million shares worth 33.7 million dinars (\$89 million) in 1990.

Election campaign ignores Israel's economic woes

TEL AVIV (R) — Despite the kind of pessimistic statistics that have doomed many governments, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's handling of Israel's economy has not even been a major issue in this week's general election.

"There are no economic policies being debated in the campaign — and that is one of the reasons there is no interest in the election," said Zeev Golan of the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Policy Studies, a free-market think tank.

"People care about economic issues closest to them — 200,000 unemployed, economic stagnation, the feeling they are not going anywhere," Mr. Golan said. "But the parties, with the exception of a couple of small ones, are not talking about it."

Unemployment is now 11.5 per cent — the highest percentage in at least two decades and by far the largest numbers in the state's history. Real wages have been falling for about two years.

The substantial economic growth reported after the wave of Soviet immigration began in late 1989 masked the fact that per capita growth was negligible.

Now, with immigration dropping from nearly 30,000 per month in early 1991 to 4,000 a month now, the house building boom that fuelled most of the earlier growth is fizzling out. Unemployment among immigrants from the former Soviet Union is estimated at up to 50 per cent in some areas.

Exports, which are a measure of how well a country of only five million people is competing in the world, fell last year. A predicted sharp recovery this year has not materialised.

The solutions to these problems are difficult and the campaigns are based on slogans not solving problems," said Mr. Golan.

Both major parties — Shamir's Likud and the Labour Party headed by Yitzhak Rabin — have problems campaigning on the economy for Tuesday's general election.

Likud avows free-market beliefs but has changed relatively little since first taking power in 1977. Under Mr. Shamir, government spending as a percentage of gross domestic product has actually risen to reach 68 per cent last year.

Likud's current promises to sell-off state industries and reduce taxes raise questions about why it had not happened in Mr. Shamir's previous seven years as prime minister.

To mount an effective campaign Labour would have to condemn Mr. Shamir for not dismantling an economic system that Labour, with its east European socialist roots, first created.

Mr. Rabin's promises to sell state industries are accompanied by pledges not to harm the Histadrut, the giant labour-affiliated complex of industries and workers' organisations.

"Has there been any real focus on what needs to be done to get the economy moving? — no, I haven't seen anything," said Harry Wall, director of the Israel Office of the Anti-Defamation League, a Jewish lobby group.

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8 killed in Sarajevo mortar blast

BELGRADE (R) — Serb militia forces showered mortar bombs on teeming central Sarajevo streets Monday, killing eight people and wounding at least 80, many critically, journalists at the scene said.

Wrenching scenes of civilian carnage recalled a Serb mortar assault on a Sarajevo bread line last month that killed 16. More than 10 mortar rounds thudded into a central Sarajevo district crowded with civilians who had emerged from cellars to hunt for food or enjoy the sunshine during a pause in fighting, Sarajevo Radio said.

The dead included three children and a 26-year-old woman. At least 80 people were injured, according to doctors.

Bosnian television showed victims scattered about streets in pools of blood from gaping wounds, some writhing helplessly.

U.N. officials waiting for an elusive truce to start airlifting relief to starving people were outraged.

"This is a major setback today. We condemn in the strongest possible terms this attack on innocent civilians," General Lewis

MacKenzie, chief U.N. peacekeeping negotiator in Sarajevo, told Reuters by telephone.

Reporters said Muslim and Croat forces defending the Bosnian capital had fired on Serb units besieging the city from surrounding hills and the Serbs had unleashed a barrage of mortar bombs.

"It was a beautiful summer day, quiet except for a few detonations away from the centre, so a lot of people were out on the street, just walking, going to work or trying to find things in the shops," Sarajevo Radio editor Zoran Petrovic said.

The Serbs, a 31 per cent minority in Bosnia's 4.3 million population, are besieging Sarajevo in a rebellion against Bosnia-Herzegovina's independence from Yugoslavia.

About 300,000 people have been trapped in the city with little food, water and electricity.

United Nations peacekeeping forces have won an agreement for the Serb forces to band over control of the city airport to allow relief flights.

But they say clashes must stop for two days before they can go

ahead with the operation.

General Lewis MacKenzie, the U.N. officer in charge of the airport operation, said that although shelling gave way to a relative calm Monday morning, the situation had not improved enough to give the plan any fresh impetus.

"There are still obvious breaches of the ceasefire going on fairly regularly... even by Bosnian standards we don't have a ceasefire," Gen. MacKenzie said.

He said opening the airport and moving rival militias' guns out of range of the runway was only one step needed to relieve the starving people.

"What's really needed is for the roads themselves to be de-blockaded coming into Bosnia because we've got to have large convoys of trucks. You can imagine the amount of food that would be required," he said.

He said the plight of the trapped civilians was desperate.

One resident, who declined to be named, said: "We are dying of hunger. They keep telling us they will get help to us but more and more time goes by and the situation gets worse."

Serb irregulars surrounding

Sarajevo have blasted it with artillery and rockets for more than two months and fighting has raged on in other parts of the new state. The Serbs have won control of two-thirds of Bosnia, and vowed to take Sarajevo.

But Western diplomats say Croat forces have made gains from Serb forces in southwestern Bosnia-Herzegovina in the last week and have set back Serb efforts to create a corridor through north Bosnia from Serbia to Serb-held parts of Croatia.

More than 7,200 people have been killed and more than one million made homeless in Europe's worst refugee crisis since World War II. Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency said 1,251 people had been killed and 5,500 wounded in Sarajevo alone.

The BH Press news agency, which is allied to Bosnia's Muslim forces, said at least four people were killed in Sunday night's shelling of Sarajevo.

The trade and oil embargo has increased pressure on Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to quit. Students have been occupying Belgrade University for almost a week. But Mr. Milosevic has shown no sign of stepping down.



Václav Havel

Havel urges referendum on future

PRAGUE (AP) — President Václav Havel said that Czechs and Slovaks should be allowed to decide in a referendum whether their country stays together or splits apart.

After two weeks of intensive negotiations, Czech leader Václav Havel and Slovak leader Vladimír Mečiar agreed early Saturday to split Czechoslovakia in two.

But they asked the regional parliaments representing their two peoples to work out a final arrangement on the country's future by Sept. 30.

As early as 1993, both republics could have de facto economic and political independence.

The deal left open a slim chance the Czechoslovak Federation would survive.

"A referendum is the only constitutional and moral way," Mr. Havel said in his regular weekly radio address, warning against a "wild divorce."

Mr. Havel has been a strong advocate of a referendum on the country's future since demands for greater sovereignty began growing in Slovakia following the fall of communism to a peaceful revolution in 1989.

Despite the political turbulence that has led Czechoslovakia to the verge of a split since Mr. Havel and Mr. Mečiar emerged victorious in their respective republics in June 5-6 elections, there is still considerable support in both republics for some form of common state.

Mr. Havel is an advocate of a strong federation and continuing rapid market-oriented reforms he has fathered. Mr. Mečiar and his Movement for a Democratic Slovakia favour a loose confederation giving the two republics separate international status.

Commenting on Mr. Havel's remarks at a news conference Sunday, Mr. Klaus said he and his Slovak counterparts wanted to keep all options open.

Under the constitution, a split could only be decided by referendum. But the newly elected parliament has the authority to amend the constitution with a three-fifths majority, allowing it to make the decision.

Miroslav Macek, Mr. Klaus' right-hand negotiator, said the trend in parliament was for an accelerated divorce.

"A split by the end of the year is feasible," he said.

Mr. Havel said he would seek more influence in the crucial negotiations on the country's future.

We are at war with Russia — Moldovan leader

KISHINEV, Moldova (R) — Moldovan forces moved reinforcements towards the Slav-held city of Bender Monday and President Mircea Snegur said his tiny republic was virtually at war with Russia.

"We have to call a spade a spade. We are at war with Russia," Mr. Snegur told the Moldovan parliament.

ITAR-TASS News Agency quoted Mr. Snegur as telling lawmakers Russia was seeking to establish itself as "the policeman of the Commonwealth of Independent States."

Mr. Snegur's tough talk followed harsh words at the weekend from Russian President Boris Yeltsin that Moscow was prepared to defend the lives of Russians from strife in other former Soviet republics.

Moldovan forces massed men and equipment outside Bender's residential districts, apparently ready for another assault.

Other units could be seen moving along the road linking Kishinev to Bender, the only city on the west bank of the Dniester River in the hands of Russian-speaking rebels.

The parliament of this former Soviet republic, where ethnic Russians and Ukrainians have proclaimed a breakaway state on the east bank of the Dniester River, met in special session to discuss the crisis.

Both sides said Bender, 70 kilometres southwest of this Moldovan capital, was relatively quiet overnight after three days of heavy fighting in which the city of 140,000 was taken by Moldovan troops and then recaptured by the separatists.

A mortar shell hit a depot near the rebel-held village of Parkany during the night, touching off an explosion.

The Russian Defence Ministry said 20 soldiers were hurt, some seriously. Dniestr officials earlier said more than two dozen were killed in the blast. There was no independent word on the number of casualties.

A separate battle around the village killed six others, authorities in the Dniestr region said. Shooting was also reported early Monday morning around the

Dniestr city of Dubossary.

The Moldovan parliament went into special session to hear reports on the crisis from the ministers of defence, internal affairs and national security.

The explosion at the depot, part of an engineering battalion of the Russian 14th Army stationed in Moldova, appeared likely to increase the risk of direct Russian intervention.

Talks grouping representatives from Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Romania were expected in Kishinev, in a continuation of earlier efforts to reel in the bloodshed.

At the weekend President Yeltsin and his senior lieutenants warned Moldova they would not sit by idly while ethnic Russians — whether troops or Dniestr residents — came under attack.

"We want to settle all matters at the negotiating table... but when dozens of people are killed and when there is a war going on we cannot remain idle, especially when it is happening on our borders," Mr. Yeltsin said.

"In this case we must react to defend people and to stop the bloodshed. We have the strength to do that," he told reporters at Moscow airport on his return from official visits to the United States and Canada.

The conflict between Moldova's ethnic Romanian majority and the Russian and Ukrainian rebels, most of the population in the Dniestr area, is one of the deadliest ethnic disputes in the former Soviet Union.

ITAR-TASS News Agency quoted Mr. Snegur Sunday as accusing Moscow of imperialist designs and saying any intervention by the 14th Army would mark the start of all-out war.

Moldova consists mainly of former Romanian lands annexed by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin in World War II.

The Dniestr separatists seek independence because they fear eventual unification between Moldova and Romania would leave them second-class citizens.

Romania Sunday condemned what it called "intervention and use of force" by the Russian 14th Army in the fighting for Bender.

Tokyo conference pledges \$880 million for Cambodia

TOKYO (Agencies) — A 33-nation Tokyo conference agreed cash pledges Monday totalling \$880 million to help rebuild war-torn Cambodia's shattered economy and social structures, a Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

The sum was unexpectedly in excess of the \$595 million sought by the United Nations for Cambodian rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts under the 1991 Paris peace accords.

In a final declaration, the ministerial conference on rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia expressed serious concern at the Khmer Rouge refusal to join other Cambodian factions in disarming under U.N. supervision, as required under the peace agreement.

Voicing ringing support for the United Nations-brokered peace process, however, delegates vowed to implement without delay the commitments already made towards the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia.

Meanwhile the director of the United Nations effort to rebuild

Cambodia after two decades of war opened an international conference Monday by appealing to Khmer Rouge guerrillas to disarm.

U.N. special representative Yasushi Akashi chastised the hardline Marxist guerrilla group for refusing to give up their weapons as required by a peace accord signed in October.

Implementing the agreement "is going to be difficult enough as it is, given the shortage of funds and personnel we face and the widespread degradation of the infrastructure in Cambodia after 20 years of conflict," Mr. Akashi said.

"But the refusal of one party to honour the obligations of the agreement it signed last October in Paris is a threat to all United Nations operations in Cambodia, including rehabilitation and reconstruction."

Khmer Rouge President Khieu Samphan bowed to diplomatic pressure and agreed at the last minute to attend the conference, which he had threatened to boycott.



After 35 years, woman gets voice back

VAN BUREN, Maine (AP) — The day her first husband died in 1956, Martha Ouellette began to lose her voice. At first she could utter fragments of phrases understandable to those close to her, but her speech gradually became unintelligible. For 35 years, through a second marriage and the births of 35 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren, listeners had to guess what she was trying to say. She became withdrawn. Her family took her for a complete neurological workup, but the doctors found nothing wrong with her. Now 80, she might have spent the rest of her life without a voice were it not for her son's chance encounter with a stranger. The Rev. Roland LaJoie met a woman at a seminar who sounded a lot like his mother. The woman told him, "oh, really? Well, she probably has spasmodic dysphonia," he said. The disorder is caused by the muscles getting too much stimulation from the nerves and contracting too tightly. As many as 30,000 people in the United States are believed to have spasmodic dysphonia, doctors say, but only a few thousand people have been diagnosed. Rev. LaJoie found that people with the disorder could speak normally if they receive small injections of botulinum toxin — which causes botulism in large amounts — in the vocal chords. His mother went to a Boston hospital for her first injection in November. Two days later, she was talking again.

'Rainforest' plan could save London Zoo

LONDON (R) — Financially troubled London Zoo could be saved by proposals to transform much of it into replica rainforest, backers of the plan said. The £51-million (\$115-million) plan will be launched next month in an attempt to rescue the world's oldest zoo, in London's Regent Park. The proposals need the approval of the Zoological Society of London — the zoo's governors — the government and local planners. Besides the rainforest plan, they include a huge aquarium, with coral reef and sharks, which visitors would be able to walk through in a plastic tunnel. The scheme envisages three varieties of rainforest built under cover in a pavilion and a specially reproduced savannah for giraffes and zebras. The rainforests would feature trees of three different areas — Africa, South East Asia and the Amazon — and would provide a habitat for apes and monkeys.

Record price for silver coffee pot

PARIS (R) — An anonymous buyer paid a world record 7.5 million francs (1.4 million) for an 18th century coffee pot by French silversmith Francois-Thomas Germain at a weekend auction in Monaco, Sotheby's said.

Tabloid: Charles blames Diana for biography

LONDON (R) — The best-selling daily Sun said Prince Charles believes his wife Princess Diana was behind a book which alleges she tried to commit suicide because of a loveless marriage. The tabloid said Prince Charles has refused to read Diana — Her True Story by Andrew Morton, which has caused a sensation in Britain, but has been told about its contents by close friends. Prince Charles was quoted in the Sun as telling friends: "When I hear what is in the book, I can hear my wife's voice saying exactly the same words." He feels Diana's cooperation is "a total betrayal," the Sun said. Mr. Morton has said Princess Diana did not cooperate with the book but boasted an array of her close friends as his sources who allegedly told him about her cries for help, her jealousies, her slimming disease and her disillusion with her marriage to Prince Charles. A friend of the heir to the throne was quoted as saying: "It is impossible to challenge the truth of the book because it clearly comes from the horse's mouth. But it is only one side of the story and a very prejudiced one." The friend added: "It is, as the book says, her story, but it is as she sees it." The Sun said that Prince Charles has insisted on maintaining a dignified silence but said friends are now urging him to break ranks and talk openly about his feelings of betrayal. They are urging him to "deal with the matter," the Sun said.

S. African markets plunge on talks suspension

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South African financial markets plunged Monday on doubts over the future of democracy talks and President F.W. de Klerk's visit to an overseas visit to deal with the crisis.

Anti-apartheid sports leader Steve Tshwete said South Africa's return to world sport could be in question because of the killing of 39 blacks last week in Boipatong township, the worst massacre of the apartheid reform era.

Police reported another 13 blacks killed Sunday — five in a raid on a migrant worker hostel in Soweto and five by a gunman who opened fire on a tavern in Vosloorus township southeast of Johannesburg.

On Sunday African National Congress President Nelson Mandela cancelled talks with the government planned for Tuesday and called an emergency meeting of ANC leaders to review the future of bilateral and multi-party talks about ending white rule.

ANC spokesman Pallo Jordan later stressed that Mr. Mandela was referring only to Tuesday's talks. "Other negotiations, I don't think have been called into question," he said.

Foreign Minister P.W. Botha

said Mr. de Klerk, who left for Spain Sunday hours before Mr. Mandela's speech, would return 24 hours early for a cabinet meeting Wednesday.

The ANC asked Monday that proceedings at CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) be suspended until after a meeting of the ANC policy making committee Tuesday.

Working groups at CODESA, forum for talks on the transition to a non-racial constitution, were due to discuss creation of a climate for free political activity.

Up to 5,000 black workers marched through central Johannesburg Monday to protest at the Boipatong killings and demand a moratorium on retrenchments.

Communist Party chief Chris Hani, leading the march, said blacks were outraged at the Boipatong killing, which residents blamed on Inkatha Freedom Party supporters in a nearby hostel.

"We say the government has contributed significantly to the current killings," he said.

The march was heading for the financial district, where sentiment was already reeling at the prospect of democracy negotiations floundering.

"Everyone is nervous. The fu-

tures are down by about 60 points and we might see further falls in the spot market," a dealer said.

Among leading shares De Beers Consolidated Mines Ltd fell 1.25 rand or 1.4 per cent in early trade. Anglo American Corporation of South Africa Ltd, the country's biggest mining house, fell 1.75 rand to 120 rand.

The Financial Rand, a key indicator of confidence in the economy, slumped seven per cent to 3.85 to the dollar from 3.60 at the close Friday.

Mr. Mandela told angry followers at a rally that the massacre at Boipatong, a shanty town south of Johannesburg, was the worst since the police shot 69 people at Sharpeville in 1960.

Police supported by South African Defence Force troops patrolled Boipatong and other settlements Monday in the tense Vaal industrial region southwest of Johannesburg.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said Monday South Africa should be expelled from the Olympics if Mr. de Klerk failed to take at least one of three steps to end violence before the games begin in July.

"When we return to the Olympics... we cannot do it with the country in a state of national mourning for our dead and while we are caught up in a deepening political crisis," Archbishop Tutu said in a sermon in Cape Town.

Archbishop Tutu, winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, said political leaders had to end bickering and insults over the causes of violence that has killed about 120 people in a week.

"Those who choose to insulate themselves from the suffering and grief caused by this horrible slaughter must realise they cannot have both a Boipatong and a Barcelona," Archbishop Tutu said.

He set three conditions for South Africa's participation in the Olympics for the first time in 32 years:

— The perpetrators of the Boipatong massacre should be found, tried, convicted and sentenced without delay.

— There should be multi-party agreement among groups negotiating for democracy on the deployment of an international monitoring force in areas hit by violence.

— De Klerk should assume personal responsibility for the security forces pending agreement with other parties on joint control of the police and army.

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Ramos proclaimed new Philippine president

MANILA (AP) — Congress Monday officially proclaimed former Defence Secretary Fidel Ramos as the winner of the May 11 national election and the next president of the Philippines.

Sen. Joseph Estrada, a former actor, was proclaimed as winner of the vice presidential race. Vice presidents are elected separately, and Sen. Estrada ran with defeated candidate Eduardo Cojuangco.

Gen. Ramos, 64, takes office on June 30 as the eighth president of the Republic of the Philippines, succeeding Corason Aquino who supported him in the campaign.

He won the seven-way contest with 23.5 per cent of the votes, the smallest mandate in Philippine history.

A joint session of the Senate and House of Representatives voted in acceptance findings of a congressional committee which last week certified Gen. Ramos and Mr. Estrada as the winners.

Fifteen of the senators voted to proclaim Gen. Ramos and Mr. Estrada. Two voted against the proclamation and nine abstained.

The vote among the House members was 106 for proclamation, two against and 21 abstentions. Among those who voted against Gen. Ramos was congresswoman Tessie Oreta, Mrs. Aquino's sister-in-law.

Mrs. Oreta claimed the Aquino administration had illegally used public funds to buy support for Gen. Ramos.

Before the voting, Gen. Ramos, opponents charged that Congress was railroaded the proclamation without exercising its constitutional duty to determine who honestly won the election.

Last week, a congressional committee completed certifying results from the balloting, which showed the former defence secretary the winner in the seven-way contest.

Before the voting, two senators who supported Mr. Cojuangco said the committee had disregarded numerous irregularities in election records.

The committee turned down requests by Mr. Cojuangco and runner-up Miriam Defensor Santiago to examine precinct returns from selected provinces to see if the figures tallied with provincial recaps submitted to Congress.



Fidel Ramos

Meanwhile Gen. Ramos and Imelda Marcos discussed the return of her late husband's body from Hawaii during a reconciliation meeting, a congressman said Monday.

"They discussed the possibility of flying in soon the remains of the late President Ferdinand Marcos from Hawaii to the Philippines," said Rep. Jose De Venecia, who hosted the Sunday meeting at his home.

Mr. De Venecia said no firm plans were agreed upon during the meeting. Sources speaking on condition of anonymity said Mr. Marcos' body could be returned in September.

Gen. Ramos, a second cousin of Ferdinand Marcos, played a key role in the 1986 uprising that installed Corason Aquino as president. He then defended her against seven coup attempts.

Mr. Marcos died in exile in Hawaii in 1989, and Mrs. Aquino, citing security worries, banned his body from the Philippines. Gen. Ramos has said he would be willing to allow burial here.

Police attacked with tear gas and nightsticks Monday to disperse nearly 50,000 people who jammed a major thoroughfare to demand restoration of "people power."

One man was shot and two people were arrested during the demonstration on the site of the 1986 "people power revolution."

Handbills identified the group as the heretofore unknown "reserved manpower of good wisdom for all nations." But several people said they had come because the leader of the demonstration, a part-time radio commentator, promised them jobs building a temple.

Chinese ex-president dies

PEKING (R) — China's ex-President Li Xianmin, a hardline behind-the-scenes powerbroker, has died at the age of 83 in the midst of a bitter debate by the ageing leadership on conflicting visions of the future.

Mr. Li, president for five years before being forced out in 1988 to become chairman of the advisory committee to parliament, died late Sunday night of an unspecified illness, the New China News Agency said Monday.

As one of the eight aged leaders — informally called the "immortals" — who control Chinese politics from behind the scenes, Mr. Li was much more influential than his post as chairman of the largely powerless Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference would suggest.

Mr. Li has not been seen in public since missing the last meeting of the consultative body this

past March because he was in hospital.

Chinese sources said that Mr. Li and officials beholden to him had recently been among the group who wanted to stress Communist ideology instead of Deng Xiaoping's push to make rapid growth and deep economic reform the cornerstone of China's policy.

"His death comes at an extremely tricky time," said a diplomat, noting that the Communist Party was in the midst of a power struggle to set its direction for the next five years.

All the most influential men in the Communist Party are in their 80s and 90s, and many are infirm. None of the younger leaders — even those in key positions — could survive politically without their elderly patrons, analysts said.

Mayors want more specifics on Clinton's economic proposals

HOUSTON (AP) — Democratic mayors are welcoming Bill Clinton's new jobs and economic investment programme but want more specifics on what it means for inner cities.

"I'm going to look at it as objectively as we can," said Boston's Democratic Mayor Ray Flynn, president of the mayors' group. "What's good here for the economy of the country is also good politics."

Mr. Clinton unveiled an economic investment plan he said will spend \$50 billion a year for four years, raising taxes on the rich to finance new jobs, education and health programmes.

Mr. Flynn said Sunday that Mr. Clinton told him \$20 billion of that annual amount would go into a jobs programme, one of the conference of mayors' priorities.

But Mr. Flynn said he wanted Mr. Clinton to spell out how much of that would go directly to cities for urban uses.

"It's exactly what we've been pushing," Mr. Flynn said. "That would create hundreds of thousands of new private sector jobs."

Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, a strong Clinton supporter, called it "a dynamic, aggressive

and progressive plan that meets the needs of cities." He said the \$20 billion portion for infrastructure would create jobs in cities.

"This plan, in my opinion, shows that he has been listening," Mr. Jackson said. "If this programme is not welcomed by the mayors, I cannot imagine what will be."

Mr. Flynn said the proposal leaves Mr. Clinton with "a clear field" for the urban vote. But Mr. Flynn has continued to withhold a presidential endorsement.

The Boston mayor shocked the Clinton campaign earlier this month by leading a delegation of mayors to meet with independent Ross Perot, and Mr. Flynn has sought to use the Perot candidacy to pressure Mr. Clinton and President George Bush to address the mayors' urban agenda.